

The Centuries' Poetry

AN ANTHOLOGY

COMPILED BY DENYS KILHAM ROBERTS

VOLUME

5

BRIDGES TO THE PRESENT DAY

PENGUIN BOOKS

HARMONDSWORTH, MIDDLESEX

U30 H10314

FIRST PUBLISHED 1938
REPRINTED 1939, 1940, 1942, 1945, 1949

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in the companion volume
[Hood to Hardy]*

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN FOR
PENGUIN BOOKS LTD BY THE WHITEFRIARS PRESS LTD

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ROBERT BRIDGES

'I Heard a Linnet Courting ..'

I heard a linnèt courting
His lady in the spring
His mates were idly sporting,
Nor stayed to hear him sing
His song of love —
I fear my speech distorting
His tender love.

The phrases of his pleading
Were full of young delight ;
And she that gave him heeding
Interpreted aright
His gay, sweet notes, —
So sadly marred in the reading, —
His tender notes

And when he ceased, the hearer
Awaited the refrain,
Till swiftly perching nearer
He sang his song again,
His pretty song —
Would that my verse spake clearer
His tender song !

Ye happy, airy creatures !
That in the merry spring
Think not of what misfeatures
Or cares the year may bring ;
But unto love
Resign your simple natures
To tender love.

On a Dead Child

Perfect little body, without fault or stain on thee,
 With promise of strength and manhood full and fair !
 Though cold and stark and bare,
 The bloom and the charm of life doth awhile remain on thee.

Thy mother's treasure wert thou ; — alas ! no longer
 To visit her heart with wondrous joy ; to be
 Thy father's pride ; — ah, he
 Must gather his faith together, and his strength make stronger

To me, as I move thee now in the last duty,
 Dost thou with a turn or gesture anon respond ;
 Startling my fancy fond
 With a chance attitude of the head, a freak of beauty.

Thy hand clasps, as 'twas wont, my finger, and holds it:
 But the grasp is the clasp of Death, heartbreaking and stiff;
 Yet feels to my hand as if
 'Twas still thy will, thy pleasure and trust that enfolds it.

So I lay thee there, thy sunken eyelids closing, —
 Go lie thou there in thy coffin, thy last little bed ! —
 Propping thy wise, sad head,
 Thy firm, pale hands across thy chest disposing.

So quiet ! doth the change content thee ? — Death, whither hast
 he taken thee ?
 To a world, do I think, that rights the disaster of this ?
 The vision of which I miss,
 Who weep for the body, and wish but to warm thee . . .
 awaken thee ?

Ah ! little at best can all our hopes avail us
 To lift this sorrow, or cheer us, when in the dark,
 Unwilling, alone we embark,
 And the things we have seen and have known and have heard
 of, fail us.

'I Will Not Let Thee Go . '

I will not let thee go
Ends all our month-long love in this²
Can it be summed up so,
Quit in a single kiss²
I will not let thee go.

I will not let thee go
If thy words' breath could scare thy deeds,
As the soft south can blow
And toss the feathered seeds,
Then might I let thee go.

I will not let thee go.
Had not the great sun seen, I might,
Or were he reckoned slow
To bring the false to light,
Then might I let thee go

I will not let thee go.
The stars that crowd the summer skies
Have watched us so below
With all their million eyes,
I dare not let thee go.

I will not let thee go. \
Have we not chid the changeful moon,
Now rising late, and now
Because she set too soon,
And shall I let thee go²

I will not let thee go.
Have not the young flowers been content,
Plucked ere their buds could blow,
To seal our sacrament²
I cannot let thee go.

I will not let thee go.
 I hold thee by too many bands:
 Thou sayest farewell, and lo!
 I have thee by the hands,
 And will not let thee go.

FRANCIS THOMPSON

The Hound of Heaven

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days,
 I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
 I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
 Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears
 I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
 Up vistaed hopes I sped,
 And shot, precipitated,
 Adown Titanic glooms of chasmèd fears,
 From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.
 But with unhurrying chase,
 And unperturbèd pace,
 Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
 They beat – and a Voice beat
 More instant than the Feet –
 ‘All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.’

I pleaded, outlaw-wise,
 By many a hearted casement, curtained red,
 Trellised with intertwining charities,
 (For, though I knew His love Who followèd,
 Yet was I sore adread
 Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside.)
 But, if one little casement parted wide,
 The gust of His approach would clash it to.
 Fear wist not to evade, as Love wist to pursue.
 Across the margent of the world I fled,
 And troubled the gold gateways of the stars,

Smiting for shelter on their clangèd bars,
Fretted to dulcet jars
And silvern chatter the pale ports o' the moon.
I said to Dawn Be sudden – to Eve Be soon;
With thy young skiey blossoms heap me over
From this tremendous Lover –
Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see!
I tempted all His servitors, but to find
My own betrayal in their constancy,
In faith to Him their fickleness to me,
Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit.
To all swift things for swiftness did I sue,
Clung to the whistling mane of every wind
But whether they swept, smoothly fleet,
The long savannahs of the blue,
Or whether, Thunder-driven,
They clangèd His chariot 'thwart a heaven,
Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o' their feet –
Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.
Still with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
Came on the following Feet,
And a Voice above their beat –
'Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me'

I sought no more that after which I strayed
In face of man or maid,
But still within the little children's eyes
Seems something, something that replies,
They at least are for me, surely for me!
I turned me to them very wistfully,
But just as their young eyes grew sudden fair
With dawning answers there,
Their angel plucked them from me by the hair

'Come then, ye other children, Nature's — share
 With me' (said I) 'your delicate fellowship;
 Let me greet you lip to lip,
 Let me twine with you caresses,
 Wantoning
 With our Lady-Mother's vagrant tresses,
 Banqueting
 With her in her wind^{ed}-walled palace,
 Underneath her azured daïs,
 Quaffing, as your taintless way is,
 From a chalice
 Lucent-weeping out of the day-spring '
 So it was done:
I in their delicate fellowship was one —
 Drew the bolt of Nature's secrecies.
I knew all the swift importings
On the wilful face of skies;
I knew how the clouds arise
Spumed of the wild sea-snortings;
All that's born or dies
Rose and drooped with; made them shapers
Of mine own moods, or wailful or divine,
With them joyed and was bereaven.
I was heavy with the even,
When she lit her glimmering tapers
Round the day's dead sanctities.
I laughed in the morning's eyes.
I triumphed and I saddened with all weather,
Heaven and I wept together,
And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine;
Against the red throb of its sunset heart
I laid my own to beat,
And share commingling heat;
But not by that, by that, was eased my hum in smit
In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's grey cheek.
For ah! we know not what each other says,
 These things, and I, in sound *I* speak —

Their sound is but their stir, they speak by silences.
Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my drouth,

Let her, if she would owe me,
Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show me
The breasts of her tenderness

Never did any milk of hers once bless

My thirsting mouth

Nigh and nigh draws the chase,

With unperturbèd pace,

Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,

And past those noisèd Feet

A Voice comes yet more fleet —

‘Lo! naught contents thee, who content’st not Me.’

Naked I wait Thy love’s uplifted stroke!

My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from me,

And smitten me to my knee,

I am defenceless utterly.

I slept, methinks, and woke,

And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep.

In the rash lusthead of my young powers,

I shook the pillaring hours

And pulled my life upon me; grimed with smears,

I stand amid the dust o’ the mounded years —

My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap.

My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,

Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream

Yea, faileth now even dream

The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist,

Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossomy twist

I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,

Are yielding, cords of all too weak account

For earth with heavy griefs so overplussed

Ah! is Thy love indeed

A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,

Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?

Ah! must —

Designer infinite! —

Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst hmn with it?
 My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the dust;
 And now my heart is as a broken fount,
 Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt down ever
 From the dank thoughts that shiver
 - Upon the sighful branches of my mind
 Such is; what is to be?
 The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind?
 I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds;
 Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds
 From the hid battlements of Eternity,
 Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then
 Round the half glimpsèd turrets slowly wash again.
 But not ere him who summoneth
 I first have seen, enwound
 With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned,
 His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.
 Whether man's heart or life it be which yields
 Thee harvest, must Thy harvest-fields
 Be dunged with rotten death?
 Now of that long pursuit
 Comes on at hand the bruit;
 That Voice is round me like a bursting sea
 'And is thy earth so marred,
 Shattered in shard on shard?
 Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me!
 'Strange, piteous, futile thing!
 Wherefore should any set thee love apart?
 Seeing none but I makes much of naught' (He said)
 'And human love needs human meriting
 How hast thou merited –
 Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot?
 Alack, thou knowest not
 How little worthy of any love thou art!
 Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,
 Save Me, save only Me?

All which I took from thee I did but take,
Not for thy harms,
But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms
All which thy child's mistake
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home—
Rise, clasp My hand, and come!

Halts by me that footfall:
Is my gloom, after all,
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?
'Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
I am He Whom thou seekest!
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me.'

ALICE MEYNELL

The Rainy Summer

There's much afoot in heaven and earth this year,
The winds hunt up the sun, hunt up the moon,
Trouble the dubious dawn, hasten the drear
Height of a threatening noon

No breath of boughs, no breath of leaves, of fronds
May linger or grow warm, the trees are loud,
The forest, rooted, tosses in her bonds,
And strains against the cloud.

No scents may pause within the garden-fold,
The rifled flowers are cold as ocean-shells,
Bees, humming in the storm, carry their cold
Wild honey to cold cells

'I Am The Way'

Thou art the Way.
 Hadst Thou been nothing but the goal,
 I cannot say
 If Thou hadst ever met my soul.

I cannot see —
 I, child of process — if there lies
 An end for me,
 Full of repose, full of replies.

I'll not reproach
 The road that winds, my feet that err.
 Access, approach
 Art Thou, Time, Way, and Way farer.

To Any Poet

Thou who singest through the earth
 All the earth's wild creatures fly thee;
 Everywhere thou marrest mirth, —
 Dumbly they defy thee;
 There is something they deny thee.

Pines thy fallen nature ever
 For the unfallen Nature sweet.
 But she shuns thy long endeavour,
 Though her flowers and wheat
 Throng and press thy pausing feet.

Though thou tame a bird to love thee
 Press thy face to grass and flowers,
 All these things reserve above thee
 Secrets in the bowers,
 Secrets in the sun and showers.

Sing thy sorrow, sing thy gladness,
 In thy songs must wind and tree

Bear the fictions of thy sadness,
Thy humanity.
For their truth is not for thee.

Wait, and many a secret nest,
Many a hoarded winter-store
Will be hidden on thy breast.

Things thou longest for
Will not fear or shun thee more.

Thou shalt intimately lie
In the roots of flowers that thrust
Upwards from thee to the sky,
With no more distrust
When they blossom from thy dust.

Silent labours of the rain
Shall be near thee, reconciled,
Little lives of leaves and grain,
All things shy and wild,
Tell thee secrets, quiet child.

Earth, set free from thy fair fancies
And the art thou shalt resign,
Will bring forth her rue and pansies
Unto more divine
Thoughts than any thoughts of thine.

Nought will fear thee, humbled creature
There will lie thy mortal burden
Pressed unto the heart of Nature,
Songless in a garden,
With a long embrace of pardon

Then the truth all creatures tell,
And His will Whom thou entreatest,
Shall absorb thee, there shall dwell
Silence, the completest
Of thy poems, last, and sweetest

A. E. HOUSMAN

'Shot? So Quick, so Clean an Ending? ...'

Shot³ so quick, so clean an ending³
Oh that was right, lad, that was brave
Yours was not an ill for mending,
'Twas best to take it to the grave.

Oh you had forethought, you could reason,
And saw your road and where it led,
And early wise and brave in season
Put the pistol to your head.

Oh soon, and better so than later
After long disgrace and scorn,
You shot dead the household traitor,
The soul that should not have been born

Right you guessed the rising morrow
And scorned to tread the mire you must
Dust's your wages, son of sorrow,
But men may come to worse than dust.

Souls undone, undoing others, –
Long time since the tale began.
You would not live to wrong your brothers.
Oh lad, you died as fits a man.

Now to your grave shall friend and stranger
With ruth and some with envy come
Undishonoured, clear of danger,
Clean of guilt, pass hence and home.

Turn safe to rest, no dreams, no waking,
And here, my in, here's the wreath I've made
'Tis not a gift that's worth the taking,
But wear it and it will not fade

'When First my Way to Fair I Took ...'

When first my way to fair I took
Few pence in purse had I,
And long I used to stand and look
At things I could not buy.

Now times are altered: if I care
To buy a thing, I can,
The pence are here and here's the fair,
But where's the lost young man?

— To think that two and two are four
And neither five nor three
The heart of man has long been sore
And long 'tis like to be

Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries

These, in the day when heaven was falling,
The hour when earth's foundations fled,
Followed their mercenary calling
And took their wages and are dead.

Their shoulders held the sky suspended;
They stood, and earth's foundations stay,
What God abandoned, these defended,
And saved the sum of things for pay.

'Tell Me Not Here, It Needs Not Saying'

Tell me not here, it needs not saying,
What tune the enchantress plays
In aftermaths of soft September
Or under blanching may,
For she and I were long acquainted
And I knew all her ways

On russet floors, by waters idle,
 The pine lets fall its cone;
 The cuckoo shouts all day at nothing
 In leafy dells alone;
 And traveller's joy beguiles in autumn
 Hearts that have lost their own.

On acres of the seeded grasses
 The changing burnish heaves;
 Or marshalled under moons of harvest
 Stand still all night the sheaves;
 Or beeches strip in storms for winter
 And stain the wind with leaves.

Possess, as I possessed a season,
 The countries I resign,
 Where over elmy plains the highway
 Would mount the hills and shune,
 And full of shade the pillared forest
 Would murmur and be mine.

For nature, heartless, witless nature,
 Will neither care nor know
 What stranger's feet may find the meadow
 And trespass there and go,
 Nor ask amid the dews of morning
 If they are mine or no.

EDWARD THOMAS

Tall Nettles

Tall nettles cover up, as they have done
 These many springs, the rusty harrow, the plough
 Long worn out, and the roller made of stone
 Only the elm butt tops the nettle now.

This corner of the farmyard I like most:
As well as any bloom upon a flower
I like the dust on the nettles, never lost
Except to prove the sweetness of a shower.

The New House

Now first, as I shut the door,
I was alone
In the new house, and the wind
Began to moan.

Old at once was the house,
And I was old,
My ears were teased with the dread
Of what was foretold,

Nights of storm, days of mist, without end;
Sad days when the sun
Shone in vain: old griefs and griefs
Not yet begun.

All was foretold me, naught
Could I foresee;
But I learned how the wind would sound
After these things should be

CHARLOTTE MEW

Sea Love

Tide be runnin' the great world over.
'T was only last June month I mind that we
Was thinkin' the toss and the call in the breast of the lover
So everlastin' as the sea.

Here's the same little fishes that sputter and swim,
 Wi' the moon's old glim on the grey, wet sand;
 An' him no more to me nor me to him
 Than the wind goin' over my hand.

J. E. FLECKER

The Old Ships

I have seen old ships sail like swans asleep
 Beyond the village which men still call Tyre,
 With leaden age o'ercargoed, dipping deep
 For Famagusta and the hidden sun
 That rings black Cyprus with a lake of fire,
 And all those ships were certainly so old
 Who knows how oft with squat and noisy gun,
 Questing brown slaves or Syrian oranges,
 The pirate Genoese
 Hell-raked them till they rolled
 Blood, water, fruit and corpses up the hold
 But now through friendly seas they softly run,
 Painted the mid-sea blue or shore-sea green,
 Still patterned with the vine and grapes in gold.

But I have seen,
 Pointing her shapely shadows from the dawn
 And image tumbled on a rose-swept bay,
 A drowsy ship of some yet older day,
 And, wonder's breath indrawn,
 Thought I – who knows – who knows – but in that same
 (Fished up beyond Ææa, patched up new
 – Stern painted brighter blue –)
 That talkative, bald-headed seaman came
 (Twelve patient comrades sweating at the oar)

From Troy's doom-crimson shore,
And with great lies about his wooden horse
Set the crew laughing, and forgot his course.

It was so old a ship — who knows, who knows?
— And yet so beautiful, I watched in vain
To see the mast burst open with a rose,
And the whole deck put on its leaves again.

Yasmin

A GHAZEL

How splendid in the morning glows the lily with what grace he
throws

His supplication to the rose do roses nod the head, Yasmin?

But when the silver dove descends I find the little flower of
friends

Whose very name that sweetly ends I say when I have said, Yasmin

The morning light is clear and cold. I dare not in that light
behold

A whiter light, a deeper gold, a glory too far shed, Yasmin.

But when the deep red eye of day is level with the lone highway
And some to Meccah turn to pray, and I toward thy bed, Yasmin,

Or when the wind beneath the moon is drifting like a soul
aswoon,

And harping planets talk love's tune with milky wings outspread,
Yasmin

Shower down thy love, O burning bright! For one night or the
other night

Will come the Gardener in white, and gathered flowers are dead,
Yasmin

SIR HENRY NEWBOLT

The War Films

O living pictures of the dead,
O songs without a sound,
O fellowship whose phantom tread
Hallows a phantom ground –
How in a gleam have these revealed
The faith we had not found.

We have sought God in a cloudy Heaven,
We have passed by God on earth.
His seven sins and his sorrows seven,
His wayworn mood and mirth,
Like a ragged cloak have hid from us
The secret of his birth.

Brother of men, when now I see
The lads go forth in line,
Thou knowest my heart is hungry in me
As for thy bread and wine:
Thou knowest my heart is bowed in me
To take their death for mine.

RUPERT BROOKE

Heaven

Fish (fly-replete, in depth of June,
Dawdling away their wat'ry noon)
Ponder deep wisdom, dark or clear,
Each secret fishy hope or fear.
Fish say, they have their Stream and Pond;
But is there anything Beyond?
This life cannot be All, they swear,
For how unpleasant, if it were!
One may not doubt that, somehow, Good
Shall come of Water and of Mud;
And, sure, the reverent eye must see
A Purpose in Liquidity.
We darkly know, by Faith we cry,
The future is not Wholly Dry.
Mud unto mud! — Death eddies near —
Not here the appointed End, not here!
But somewhere, beyond Space and Time,
Is wetter water, slimmer slime!
And there (they trust) there swimmeth One
Who swam ere rivers were begun,
Immense, of fishy form and mind,
Squamous, omnipotent, and kind;
And under that Almighty Fin
The littlest fish may enter in
Oh! never fly conceals a hook,
Fish say, in the Eternal Brook,
But more than mundane weeds are there,
And mud, celestially fair;
Fat caterpillars drift around,
And Paradisal grubs are found,

Unfading moths, immortal flies,
And the worm that never dies.
And in that Heaven of all their wish,
There shall be no more land, say fish.

Desertion

So light we were, so right we were, so fair faith shone,
And the way was laid so certainly, that, when I'd gone,
What dumb thing looked up at you? Was it something heard,
Or a sudden cry, that meekly and without a word
You broke the faith, and strangely, weakly, slipped apart?
You gave in — you, the proud of heart, unbowed of heart!
Was this, friend, — the end of all that we could do?
And have you found the best for you, the rest for you?
Did you learn so suddenly (and I not by!)
Some whispered story, that stole the glory from the sky,
And ended all the splendid dream, and made you go
So dully from the fight we know, the light we know?

O faithless! the faith remains, and I must pass
Gay down the way, and on alone. Under the grass
You wait; the breeze moves in the trees, and stirs, and calls,
And covers you with white petals, with light petals.
There it shall crumble, frail and fair, under the sun,
O little heart, your brittle heart; till day be done,
And the shadows gather, falling light, and, white with dew,
Whisper, and weep, and creep to you Good sleep to you!

RUDYARD KIPLING

'Cities and Thrones and Powers . . '

Cities and Thrones and Powers,
Stand in Time's eye,
Almost as long as flowers,
Which daily die
But, as new buds put forth
To glad new men,
Out of the spent and unconsidered Earth,
The Cities rise again.

This season's Daffodil,
She never hears
What change, what chance, what chill,
Cut down last year's,
But with bold countenance,
And knowledge small,
Esteems her seven days' continuance
To be perpetual

So Time that is o'er kind
To all that be,
Ordains us e'en as blind,
As bold as she
That in our very death,
And burial sure,
Shadow to shadow, well persuaded, saith,
'See how our works endure!'

GEORGE WILLIAM RUSSELL ('A. E.')

Germinal

Call not thy wanderer home as yet
Though it be late.
Now is his first assailing of
The invisible gate.
Be still through that light knocking. The hour
Is thronged with fate.

To that first tapping at the invisible door
Fate answereth.

What shining image or voice, what sigh
Or honied breath,
Comes forth, shall be the master of life
Even to death.

Satyrs may follow after. Seraphs
On crystal wing
May blaze. But the delicate first comer
It shall be King.
They shall obey, even the mightiest,
That gentle thing.

All the strong powers of Dante were bowed
To a child's mild eyes,
That wrought within him that travail
From depths up to skies,
Inferno, Purgatorio
And Paradise.

Amid the soul's grave councillors
A petulant boy
Laughs under the laurels and purples, the elf
Who snatched at his joy,

Ordering Cæsar's legions to bring him
The world for his toy.

In ancient shadows and twilights
Where childhood had strayed,
The world's great sorrows were born
And its heroes were made.
In the lost boyhood of Judas
Christ was betrayed.

Let thy young wanderer dream on—
Call him not home.
A door opens, a breath, a voice
From the ancient room,
Speaks to him now. Be it dark or bright
He is knit with his doom.

W. B. YEATS

The Man who Dreamed of Faeryland

He stood among a crowd at Drumahair,
His heart hung all upon a silken dress,
And he had known at last some tenderness,
Before earth made of him her sleepy care,
But when a man poured fish into a pile,
It seemed they raised their little silver heads
And sang how day a Druid twilight sheds
Upon a dim, green, well-belovèd isle,
Where people love beside star-laden seas,
How Time may never mar their faery vows
Under the woven roofs of quicken boughs
The singing shook him out of his new ease

He wandered by the sands of Lisadill,
 His mind ran all on money cares and fears,
 And he had known at last some prudent years
 Before they heaped his grave under the hull,
 But while he passed before a plashy place,
 A lug-worm with its grey and muddy mouth
 Sang how somewhere to north or west or south
 There dwelt a gay, exulting, gentle race,
 And how beneath those three times blessed skies
 A Danaan fruitage makes a shower of moons,
 And as it falls awakens leafy runes.
 And at that singing he was no more wise.

He mused beside the well of Scanavin,
 He mused upon his mockers; without sul
 His sudden vengeance were a country tale,
 Now that deep earth has drunk his body in;
 But one small knot-grass growing by the pool
 Told where, ah, little, all-unneeded voice!
 Old Silence bids a lonely folk rejoice,
 And chaplet their calm brows with leafage cool;
 And how, when fades the sea-strawn robe of gold,
 A gentle feeling wraps them like a fleece,
 And all their trouble dies into its peace.
 The tale drove his fine angry mood away.

He slept under the hull of Lugnagall,
 And might have known at last unhurt and deep
 Under that cold and vapour-turbulent sleep,
 Now that old earth had taken him and all
 Were not the worms that spread about his bones,
 Proclaiming with a low and ready cry,
 Of how God leans His hands out of the sky,
 To bless that rise with honey in His power,
 That none may feel the power of quickening,
 And no one any leaf-crown need desire,
 Until He burn up Nature with a fire
 The man has found no comfort in the mire.

Meru

Civilization is hooped together, brought
Under rule, under the semblance of peace
By manifold illusion, but man's life is thought,
And he, despite his terror, cannot cease
Ravening through century after century,
Ravening, raging and uprooting that he may come
Into the desolation of reality—
Egypt and Greece good-bye, and good-bye, Rome!
Hermits upon Mount Meru or Everest,
Caverned in night under the drifted snow,
Or where that snow and winter's dreadful blast
Beat down upon their naked bodies, know
That day brings round the night, that before dawn
His glory and his monuments are gone

Coole and Ballylee, 1931

Under my window-ledge the waters race,
Otters below and moor-hens on the top,
Run for a mile undimmed in Heaven's face
Then darkening through 'dark' Raftery's 'cellar' drop,
Run underground, rise in a rocky place
In Coole demesne, and there to finish up
Spread to a lake and drop into a hole
What's water but the generated soul?

Upon the border of that lake's a wood
Now all dry sticks under a wintry sun,
And in a copse of beeches there I stood,
For Nature's pulled her tragic buskin on
And all the rant's a mirror of my mood.
At sudden thunder of the mounting swan
I turned about and looked where branches break
The glittering reaches of the flooded lake.

Another emblem there! That stormy white
But seems a concentration of the sky,
And, like the soul, it sails into the sight
And in the morning's gone, no man knows why;
And is so lovely that it sets to right
What knowledge or its lack has set awry,
So arrogantly pure, a child might think
It can be murdered with a spot of ink.

Sound of a stick upon the floor, a sound
From somebody that toils from chair to chair;
Belovèd books that famous hands have bound,
Old marble heads, old pictures everywhere;
Great rooms where travelled men and children found
Content or joy; a last inheritor
Where none has reigned that lacked a name and fame
Or out of folly into folly came. ,

A spot whereon the founders lived and died
Seemed once more dear than life; ancestral trees,
Or gardens rich in memory glorified
Marriages, alliances and families,
And every bride's ambition satisfied.
Where fashion or mere fantasy decrees
Man shifts about – all that great glory spent –
Like some poor Arab tribesman and his tent.

We were the last romantics – chose for theme
Traditional sanctity and loveliness,
Whatever's written in what poets name
The book of the people, whatever most can bless
The mind of man or elevate a rhyme,
But all is changed, that high horse riderless,
Though mounted in that saddle Homer rode
Where the swan drifts upon a darkening flood

Death

Nor dread nor hope attend
A dying animal;
A man awaits his end
Dreading and hoping all,
Many times he died,
Many times rose again,
A great man in his pride
Confronting murderous men
Casts derision upon
Supersession of breath,
He knows death to the bone —
Man has created death

JULIAN GRENFELL

Into Battle

The naked earth is warm with spring,
And with green grass and bursting trees
Leans to the sun's gaze glorying, —
And quivers in the sunny breeze,
And life is colour and warmth and light,
And a striving evermore for these,
And he is dead who will not fight,
And who dies fighting has increase

The fighting man shall from the sun
Take warmth, and life from the glowing earth,
Speed with the light-foot winds to run,
And with the trees to newer birth,
And find, when fighting shall be done,
Great rest, and fullness after dearth

All the bright company of Heaven
Hold him in their high comradeship,
The Dog-Star, and the Sisters Seven,
Orion's Belt and sworded hip.

The woodland trees that stand together,
They stand to him each one a friend;
They gently speak in the windy weather;
They guide to valley and ridge's end.

The kestrel hovering by day,
And the little owls that call by night,
Bid him be swift and keen as they,
As keen of ear, as swift of sight.

The blackbird sings to him, 'Brother, brother,
If this be the last song you shall sing,
Sing well, for you may not sing another,
Brother, sing.'

In dreary, doubtful, waiting hours,
Before the brazen frenzy starts,
The horses show him nobler powers,
O patient eyes, courageous hearts!

And when the burning moment breaks,
And all things else are out of mind,
And only joy of battle takes
Him by the throat, and makes him blind,

Through joy and blindness he shall know,
Not caring much to know, that still,
Nor lead nor steel shall reach him, so
That it be not the Destined Will.

The thundering line of battle stands,
And in the air death moans and sings;
But Day shall clasp him with strong hands,
And Night shall fold him in soft wings.

ISAAC ROSENBERG

Returning, We hear the Larks

Sombre the night is:
And, though we have our lives, we know
What sinister threat lurks there

Dragging these anguished limbs, we only know
This poison-blasted track opens on our camp —
On a little safe sleep.

But hark! Joy — joy — strange joy
Lo! Heights of night ringing with unseen larks.
Music showering on our upturned listening faces

Death could drop from the dark
As easily as song —
But song only dropped,
Like a blind man's dreams on the sand
By dangerous tides,
Like a girl's dark hair, for she dreams no ruin lies there,
Or her kisses where a serpent hides

Break of Day in the Trenches

The darkness crumbles away —
It is the same old druid Time as ever.
Only a live thing leaps my hand —
A queer sardonic rat —
As I pull the parapet's poppy
To stick behind my ear.
Droll rat, they would shoot you if they knew
Your cosmopolitan sympathies
(And God knows what antipathies).
Now you have touched this English hand

You will do the same to a German —
 Soon, no doubt, if it be your pleasure
 To cross the sleeping green between.
 It seems you inwardly grin as you pass
 Strong eyes, fine limbs, haughty athletes
 Less chanced than you for life,
 Bonds to the whims of murder,
 Sprawled in the bowels of the earth,
 The torn fields of France.
 What do you see in our eyes
 At the shrieking iron and flame
 Hurled through still heavens?
 What quaver — what heart aghast?
 Poppies whose roots are in man's veins
 Drop, and are ever dropping;
 But mine in my ear is safe,
 Just a little white with the dust.

JOHN FREEMAN

Possession

I saw you
 I held you,
 And surely I heard you:
 But you were as far as any man living could be.

Though sometimes
 I have seen you,
 And touched you and heard you,
 As together we walked and your sleeve now and then brushed
 mine;
 Yet you were then
 Farther, farther

Than with body's absence –
But who walks with you now while your thoughts are here and
brush mine?

The slow waters
Of three oceans,
And the change of seasons,
Between us are but as a new-leafy hawthorn hedge,

And I see you
And hold you –
But are you yet living,
Or come you now nearer than any man living may be?

Caterpillars

Of caterpillars Fabre tells how day after day
Around the rim of a vast earth pot they crawled,
Tricked thither as they filed shuffling out one morn
Head to tail when the common hunger called.

Head to tail in a heaving ring day after day,
Night after slow night the starving mommets crept,
Each following each, head to tail day after day
An unbroken ring of hunger – then it was snapt.

I thought of you, long-heaving, horned green caterpillars,
As I lay awake. My thought crawled each after each,
Crawling at night each after each on the same nerve,
An unbroken ring of thoughts too sore for speech

Over and over and over and over again
The same hungry thoughts and the hopeless same regrets,
Over and over the same truths, again and again
In a heaving ring returning the same regrets.

W. H. DAVIES

The Truth

Since I have seen a bird one day,
His head pecked more than half away;
That hopped about, with but one eye,
Ready to fight again, and die –
Oft-times since then their private lives
Have spoilt that joy their music gives.

So, when I see this robin now,
Like a red apple on the bough,
And question why he sings so strong,
For love, or for the love of song;
Or sings, maybe, for that sweet rill
Whose silver tongue is never still –

Ah, now there comes this thought unkind,
Born of the knowledge in my mind:
He sings in triumph that last night
He killed his father in a fight;
And now he'll take his mother's blood –
The last strong rival for his food.

Dreams of the Sea

I know not why I yearn for thee again,
To sail once more upon thy fickle flood;
I'll hear thy waves wash under my death-bed,
Thy salt is lodged for ever in my blood.

Yet I have seen thee lash the vessel's sides
In fury, with thy many-tailèd whip;
And I have seen thee, too, like Galilee,
When Jesus walked in peace to Simon's ship.

And I have seen thy gentle breeze as soft
 As summer's, when it makes the cornfields run;
 And I have seen thy rude and lusty gale
 Make ships show half their bellies to the sun

 Thou knowest the way to tame the wildest life,
 Thou knowest the way to bend the great and proud
 I think of that Armada whose puffed sails,
 Greedy and large, came swallowing every cloud.

 But I have seen the sea-boy, young and drowned,
 Lying on shore and, by thy cruel hand,
 A seaweed beard was on his tender chin,
 His heaven-blue eyes were filled with common sand

 And yet, for all, I yearn for thee again,
 To sail once more upon thy fickle flood
 I'll hear thy waves wash under my death-bed,
 Thy salt is lodged for ever in my blood.

HAROLD MONRO

The Nightingale near the House

Here is the soundless cypress on the lawn.
 It listens, listens Taller trees beyond
 Listen The moon at the unruffled pond
 Stares And you sing, you sing

 That star-enchanted song falls through the air
 From lawn to lawn down terraces of sound,
 Darts in white arrows on the shadowed ground,
 While all the night you sing

 My dreams are flowers to which you are a bee,
 As all night long I listen, and my brain
 Receives your song, then loses it again
 In moonlight on the lawn.,

Now is your voice a marble high and white,
Then like a mist on fields of paradise;
Now is a raging fire, then is like ice,
Then breaks, and it is dawn.

WILFRED OWEN

Insensibility

I

Happy are men who yet before they are killed
Can let their veins run cold.
Whom no compassion fleers
Or makes their feet
Sore on the alleys cobbled with their brothers.
The front line withers,
But they are troops who fade, not flowers
For poets' tearful fooling:
Men, gaps for filling
Losses who might have fought
Longer, but no one bothers.

II

And some cease feeling
Even themselves or for themselves.
Dullness best solves
The tease and doubt of shelling,
And Chance's strange arithmetic
Comes simpler than the reckoning of their shilling.
They keep no check on Armies' decimation.

III

Happy are these who lose imagination
They have enough to carry with ammunition
Their spirit drags no pack
Their old wounds save with cold can not more ache
Having seen all things red,
Their eyes are rid
Of the hurt of the colour of blood for ever.
And terror's first constriction over,
Their hearts remain small-drawn.
Their senses in some scorching cautery of battle
Now long since ironed,
Can laugh among the dying, unconcerned

IV

Happy the soldier home, with not a notion
How somewhere, every dawn, some men attack,
And many sighs are drained
Happy the lad whose mind was never trained
His days are worth forgetting more than not
He sings along the march
Which we march taciturn, because of dusk,
The long, forlorn, relentless trend
From larger day to huger night

V

We wise, who with a thought besmirk
Blood over all our soul,
How should we see our task
But through his blunt and lashless eyes?
Alive, he is not vital overmuch,
Dying, not mortal overmuch,
Nor sad, nor proud,
Nor curious at all
He cannot tell
Old men's placidity from his

VI

But cursed are dullards whom no cannon stuns,
That they should be as stones.
Wretched are they, and mean
With paucity that never was simplicity.
By choice they made themselves immune
To pity and whatever moans in man
Before the last sea and the hapless stars;
Whatever mourns when many leave these shores;
Whatever shares
The eternal reciprocity of tears.

Exposure

Our brains ache, in the merciless iced east winds that knive us ...
Wearied we keep awake because the night is silent ...
Low, drooping flares confuse our memory of the salient ...
Worried by silence, sentries whisper, curious, nervous,
But nothing happens.

Watching, we hear the mad gusts tugging on the wire,
Like twitching agonies of men among its brambles.
Northward, incessantly, the flickering gunnery rumbles,
Far off, like a dull rumour of some other war.
What are we doing here?

The poignant misery of dawn begins to grow ...
We only know war lasts, rain soaks, and clouds sag stormy.
Dawn massing in the east her melancholy army
Attacks once more in ranks on shivering ranks of grey,
But nothing happens.

Sudden successive flights of bullets streak the silence.
Less deadly than the air that shudders black with snow,
With sidelong flowing flakes that flock, pause, and renew,
We watch them wandering up and down the wind's nonchalance,
But nothing happens.

Pale flakes with fingering stealth come feeling for our faces –
We cringe in holes, back on forgotten dreams, and stare, snow-
dazed,

Deep into grassier ditches. So we drowse, sun-dozed,
Littered with blossoms trickling where the blackbird fusses.

Is it that we are dying?

Slowly our ghosts drag home. glimpsing the sunk fires, glozed
With crusted dark-red jewels, crickets jingle there,
For hours the innocent mice rejoice the house is theirs,
Shutters and doors, all closed on us the doors are closed, –
We turn back to our dying.

Since we believe not otherwise can kind fires burn;
Nor ever suns smile true on child, or field, or fruit.
For God's invincible spring our love is made afraid;
Therefore, not loath, we lie out here, therefore were born,
For love of God seems dying.

To-night, His frost will fasten on this mud and us,
Shrivelling many hands, puckering foreheads crisp
The burying-party, picks and shovels in their shaking grasp,
Pause over half-known faces All their eyes are ice,
But nothing happens.

G. K. CHESTERTON

The Modern Manuchee

He sayeth 'there is no sin, and all his sin
Swells round him into a world made merciless,
The midnight of his universe of shame
Is the vast shadow of his shamelessness
He blames all that begat him, gods or brutes,
And sires not sons he chides as with a rod.

The sins of the children visited on the fathers
Through all generations, back to a jealous God.

The fields that heal the humble, the happy forests
That sing to men confessed and men consoled,
To him are jungles only, greedy and groping,
Heartlessly new, unvenerably old.
Beyond the pride of his own cold compassion
Is only cruelty and imputed pain:
Matched with that mood, a boy's sport in the forest
Makes comrades of the slayer and the slain.

The innocent lust of the unfallen creatures
Moves him to hidden horror but no mirth;
Misplaced morality rots in the roots unconscious,
His stifled conscience stinks through the green earth.
The green things thrust like horrible huge snails,
Horns green and gross, each lifting a leering eye
He scarce can call a flower, it lolls obscene,
Its organs gaping to the sneering sky.

Dark with that dusk the old red god of gardens,
Still pagan but not merry any more,
Stirs up the dull adulteries of the dust,
Blind, frustrate, hopeless, hollow at the core;
The plants are brutes tied with green rope and roaring
Their terrible dark loves from tree to tree.
He shrinks as from a shaft, if by him singing,
A gilded pump and pandar, goes the bee.

He sayeth, 'I have no sin; I cast the stone',
And throws his little pebble at the shrine,
Casts sin and stone away against the house
Whose health has turned earth's waters into wine.
The venom of that repudiated guilt
Poisons the sea and every natural flood
As once a wavering tyrant washed his hands,
And touching, turned the water black with blood.

The Shipwrights
FROM 'FOR FIVE GUILDS'

The sea that is above the sky
Low on it like a load did lie,
The skies grew green and black and nigh
And broke and the Flood came.
But through the inky violet sea
A candle-lighted ship went she
Whose master made our Mystery
With Noah for his name.

The high impossible horns and hair
The beards of bestial kings were there.
Birds of the East, red-gold and rare,
Crowded the mast for crown.
Grey giant birds stood gaunt and strong
But over them sang all day long
The little lark that makes a song
A mile from London town

Hard as the world God nailed with stars
That ship that on its decks and spars
Carried the world and all its wars
Troy and eternal Rome.
Hard were old Noah's timbers found,
And those we smite as hard and sound
That shall have girt the green world round
When all our ships come home

Redeem we from that world undone
Huge stones that shall outshine the sun
And crowns and bones of gods, o' errun
With leprogies of foam.
For God regathers his ancient rights
And heaven itself has newer sights,
Happier in all its harbour-lights
When all our ships come home

D. H. LAWRENCE

Kangaroo

In the northern hemisphere
Life seems to leap at the air, or skim under the wind
Like stags on rocky ground, or pawing horses, or springy scut-tailed
rabbits.

Or else rush horizontal to charge at the sky's horizon,
Like bulls or bison or wild pigs.

Or slip like water slippery towards its ends,
As foxes, stoats, and wolves, and prairie dogs.

Only mice, and moles, and rats, and badgers, and beavers, and
perhaps bears
Seem belly-plumbed to the earth's mid-navel.
Or frogs that when they leap come flop, and flop to the centre of
the earth.

But the yellow antipodal Kangaroo, when she sits up,
Who can unseat her, like a liquid drop that is heavy, and just
touches earth.

The downward drip
The down-urge.
So much denser than cold-blooded frogs

Delicate mother Kangaroo
Sitting up there rabbit-wise, but huge, plumb-weighted,
And lifting her beautiful slender face, oh! so much more gently and
finely lined than a rabbit's, or than a hare's,
Lifting her face to nibble at a round white peppermint drop, which
she loves, sensitive mother Kangaroo.

Her sensitive, long, pure-bred face.
Her full antipodal eyes, so dark,
So big and quiet and remote, having watched so many empty
dawns in silent Australia

Her little loose hands, and drooping Victorian shoulders,
And then her great weight below the waist, her vast pale belly
With a thin young yellow little paw hanging out, and straggle of a
thin long ear, like ribbon,
Like a funny trimming to the middle of her belly, thin little dangle
of an immature paw, and one thin ear

Her belly, her big haunches
And, in addition, the great muscular python-stretch of her tail

There, she shan't have any more peppermint drops
So she wistfully, sensitively sniffs the air, and then turns, goes off
in slow sad leaps

On the long flat skis of her legs,
Steered and propelled by that steel-strong snake of a tail

Stops again, half turns, inquisitive to look back.
- While something stirs quickly in her belly, and a lean little face
comes out, as from a window,
Peaked and a bit dismayed,
Only to disappear again quickly away from the sight of the world,
to snuggle down in the warmth,
Leaving the trail of a different paw hanging out

Still she watches with eternal, cocked wistfulness!
How full her eyes are, like the full, fathomless, shining eyes of an
Australian black-boy
Who has been lost so many centuries on the margins of existence!

She watches with insatiable wistfulness.
Untold centuries of watching for something to come,
For a new signal from life, in that silent lost land of the South.

Where nothing bites but insects and snakes and the sun, small life.

Where no bull roared, no cow ever lowed, no stag cried, no leopard screeched, no lion coughed, no dog barked,
But all was silent except for parrots occasionally, in the haunted blue bush.

Wistfully watching, with wonderful liquid eyes.
And all her weight, all her blood, dripping sack-wise down towards the earth's centre.
And the live little-one taking in its paw at the door of her belly.

Leap then, and come down on the line that draws to the earth's deep, heavy centre.

Snake

A snake came to my water-trough
On a hot, hot day, and I in pyjamas for the heat,
To drink there.

In the deep, strange-scented shade of the great dark carob-tree
I came down the steps with my pitcher
And must wait, must stand and wait, for there he was at the trough before me.

He reached down from a fissure in the earth-wall in the gloom
And trailed his yellow-brown slackness soft-bellied down, over the edge of the stone trough
And rested his throat upon the stone bottom,
And where the water had dripped from the tap, in a small clearness,
He sipped with his straight mouth,
Softly drank through his straight gums, into his slack long body,
Silently.

Someone was before me at my water-trough,
And I, like a second comer, waiting

He lifted his head from his drinking, as cattle do,
And looked at me vaguely, as drinking cattle do,

And flickered his two-forked tongue from his lips, and mused a
moment,
And stooped and drank a little more,
Being earth-brown, earth-golden from the burning bowels of the
earth
On the day of Sicilian July, with Etna smoking.

The voice of my education said to me
He must be killed,
For in Sicily the black, black snakes are innocent, the gold are
venomous

And voices in me said, If you were a man
You would take a stick and break him now, and finish him off.

But must I confess how I liked him,
How glad I was he had come like a guest in quiet, to drink at my
water-trough
And depart peaceful, pacified, and thankless,
Into the burning bowels of this earth?

Was it cowardice, that I dared not kill him?
Was it perversity, that I longed to talk to him?
Was it humility, to feel so honoured?
I felt so honoured

And yet those voices
If you were not afraid, you would kill him!

And truly I was afraid, I was most afraid,
But even so, honoured still more
That he should seek my hospitality
From out the dark door of the secret earth.

He drank enough
And lifted his head, dreamily, as one who has drunken,
And flickered his tongue like a forked night on the air, so black,
Seeming to lick his lips,
And looked around like a god, unseeing, into the air,
And slowly turned his head,

And slowly, very slowly, as if thrice adream,
Proceeded to draw his slow length curving round
And climb again the broken bank of my wall-face

And as he put his head into that dreadful hole,
And as he slowly drew up, snake-easing his shoulders, and entered
farther,
A sort of horror, a sort of protest against his withdrawing into that
horrid black hole,
Deliberately going into the blackness, and slowly drawing himself
after,
Overcame me now his back was turned.

I looked round, I put down my pitcher,
I picked up a clumsy log
And threw it at the water-trough with a clatter.

I think it did not hit him,
But suddenly that part of him that was left behind convulsed in
undignified haste,
Writhed like lightning, and was gone
Into the black hole, the earth-lipped fissure in the wall-front,
At which, in the intense still noon, I stared with fascination.

And immediately I regretted it.
I thought how paltry, how vulgar, what a mean act!
I despised myself and the voices of my accursed human education

And I thought of the albatross,
And I wished he would come back, my snake.

For he seemed to me again like a king,
Like a king in exile, uncrowned in the underworld,
Now due to be crowned again.

And so, I missed my chance with one of the lords
Of life.
And I have something to expiate;
A pettiness.

LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE

Epitaph

Sir, you should notice me: I am the Man;
I am Good Fortune: I am satisfied
All I desired, more than I could desire,
I have everything has gone right with me
Life was a hiding-place that played me false,
I croucht ashamed, and still was seen and scorned
But now I am not seen. I was a fool,
And now I know what wisdom dare not know
For I know Nothing. I was a slave, and now
I have ungoverned freedom, and the wealth
That cannot be conceived. for I have Nothing.
I lookt for beauty and I longed for rest,
And now I have perfection: nay, I am
Perfection: I am Nothing, I am dead.

JOHN DRINKWATER

Moonlit Apples

At the top of the house the apples are laid in rows,
And the skylight lets the moonlight in, and those
Apples are deep-sea apples of green. There goes
A cloud on the moon in the autumn night

A mouse in the wainscot scratches, and scratches, and then
There is no sound at the top of the house of men
Or mice; and the cloud is blown, and the moon again
Dapples the apples with deep-sea light.

To tombs unfathomably deep,
While Rameses and Romeo
And little Ariadne sleep.

GERALD GOULD

'This is the Horror ...'

This is the horror that, night after night,
Sits grinning on my pillow – that I meant
To mix the peace of being innocent
With the warm thrill of seeking out delight
This is the final blasphemy, the blight
On all pure purpose and divine intent –
To dress the selfish thought, the indolent,
In the priest's sable or the angel's white.
For God's sake, if you sin, take pleasure in it,
And do it for the pleasure. Do not say:
'Behold the spirit's liberty! – a minute
Will see the earthly vesture break away
And God shine through.' Say: 'Here's a sin – I'll sin it,
And there's the price of sinning – and I'll pay.'

'I am Frightened . . '

I am frightened, sweetheart – that's the long and short
Of the bad mind I bear: the scent comes back
Of an unhappy garden gone to wrack,
The flower-beds trampled for an idiot's sport,
A mass of vermin batt'ning there, a mort
Of weeds a-fester, all the green turned black,
And through the sodden glades of loss and lack
The dead winds blown of hate and false report.
There was a music in the early air,
When our young love was virgin as we were,

Ripe for the rose, new to the nightingale,
But now two ghosts walk showing each to each
The empty grace of ceremonious speech,
And I am frightened, and the air is stale.

HUMBERT WOLFE

Love is a Keeper of Swans

Love is a keeper of swans!
Helen, amid what dark wherries
are you steering the silver boat
that for all the love of Paris,
and his lips against your throat,
passed out of Troy with windless vans?
And, fairest of Italians,
where do you glimmer, Beatrice?
what light of heaven stains your wings
with gold that were all fleur de lys?
And do you hear when Dante sings?
'Love is a keeper of swans.'

Love is a keeper of swans.
Have you left the barren plain,
and stormed a gold-eagle's eyrie?
Queen-swan of the eagle strain,
what mountain has you, Mary?
and is its name, as ever, still romance?
And you, bright cygnet of immortal Hans,
you need not join your sisters yet
You have all time. Why should you hasten?
What though the lake with reeds be set,
one reed is murmuring, oh, listen!
'Love is a keeper of swans.'

ARTHUR SYMONS

Palm Sunday: Naples

Because it is the day of Palms,
Carry a palm for me,
Carry a palm in Santa Chiara,
And I will watch the sea;
There are no palms in Santa Chiara
To-day or any day for me.

I sit and watch the little sail
Lean side-ways on the sea,
The sea is blue from here to Sorrento
And the sea-wind comes to me,
And I see the white clouds lift from Sorrento
And the dark sail lean upon the sea.

I have grown tired of all these things,
And what is left for me?
I have no place in Santa Chiara,
There is no peace upon the sea;
But carry a palm in Santa Chiara,
Carry a palm for me.

LAURENCE BINYON

FROM *Tristram's End*

Calm, calm the moving waters all the night
On to that shore roll slow,
Fade into foam against the cliff's dim height,
And fall in a soft thunder, and upsurge

For ever out of unexhausted might,
Lifting their voice below
Tuned to no human dirge,
Nor from their majesty of music bend
To wail for beauty's end
Or towering spirit's most fiery overthrow;
Nor tarrieth the dawn, though she unveil
To weeping eyes their woe,
The dawn that doth not know
What the dark night hath wrought,
And over the far wave comes pacing pale,
Of all that she reveals regarding nought. —
But ere the dawn there comes a faltering tread,
Isoult, the young wife, stealing from her bed,
Sleepless with dread,
Creeps by still wall and blinded corridor,
Till from afar the salt scent of the air
Blows on her brow, and now
In that pale space beyond the open door
What mute, clasped shadow dulls her to despair
By keen degrees aware
That with the dawn her widowhood is there?

Is it wild envy or remorseful fear
Transfixes her young heart, unused to woe,
Crying to meet wrath, hatred, any foe,
Not silence drear!
Not to be vanquished so
By silence on the lips that were so dear!
Ah, sharpest stab! it is another face
That leans to Tristram's piteous embrace,
Another face she knows not, yet knows well,
Whose hands are clasped about his helpless head,
Propping it where it fell
In a vain tenderness,
But dead, — her great dream-hated rival dead,
Invulnerably dead,

Dead as her love, and cold,
And on her heart a grief heavy as stone is rolled.
She bows down, stricken in accusing pain,
And love, long-baffled, surges back again
Over her heart; she wails a shuddering cry,
While the tears blindly rain,
'I, I have killed him, I that loved him, I
That for his dear sake had been glad to die.
I loved him not enough, I could not keep
His heart, and yet I loved him, O how deep!
I cannot touch him. Will none set him free
From those, those other arms and give him me?
Alas, I may not vex him from that sleep.
He is thine in the end, thou proud one, he is thine,
Not mine, not mine!
I loved him not enough, I could not hold
My tongue from stabbing, and forsook him there.
I had not any care
To keep him from the darkness and the cold.
O all my wretched servants, where were ye?
Hath none in my house tended him but she?
Where are ye now? Can ye not hear my call?
Come hither, laggards all!
Nay, hush not so affrighted, nor so stare
Upon your lord, 'tis he!
Put out your torches, for the dawn grows clear.
And set me out within the hall a bier,
And wedding robes, the costliest that are
In all my house, prepare,
And lay upon the silks these princely dead,
And bid the sailors take that funeral bed
And set it in the ship, and put to sea,
And north to Cornwall steer.
Farewell, my lord, thy home is far from here.
Farewell, my great love, dead and doubly dear!
Carry him hence, proud queen, for he is thine,
Not mine, not mine, not mine!

Within Tintagel walls King Mark awaits his queen.
The south wind blows, surely she comes to-day!
No light hath his eye seen
Since she is gone, no pleasure, he grows gray,
His knights apart make merry and wassail,
With dice and chessboard, hound at knee, they play,
But he sits solitary all the day,
Thinking of what hath been.
And now through all the castle rings a wail,
The king arises, all his knights are dumb,
The queen, the queen is come
Not as she came of old,
Sweeping with gesture proud
To meet her wronged lord, royally arrayed,
And music ushered her, and tongues were stayed,
And all hearts beat, her beauty to behold,
But mute she comes and cold,
Borne on a bier, apparelled in a shroud,
Daisies about her sprinkled, and now bowed
Is her lord's head, and hushing upon all
Thoughts of sorrow fall,
As the snow softly, without any word,
And every breast is stirred
With wonder in its weeping,
For by her sleeping side,
In that long sleep no morning shall divide,
Is Tristram sleeping;
Tristram who wept farewell, and fled, and swore
That he would clasp his dear love never more,
And sailed far over sea
Far from his bliss and shame,
And dreamed to die at peace in Brittany
And to uncloud at last the glory of his name
Yet lo, with fingers clasping both are come,
Come again home
In all men's sight, as when of old they came,
And Tristram led Isoult, another's bride,

True to his vow, but to his heart untrue,
And silver trumpets blew
To greet them stepping o'er the flower-strewn floor,
And King Mark smiled upon them, and men cried
On Tristram's name anew,
Tristram, the king's strong champion and great pride.

Silently gazing long
On them that wrought him wrong,
Still stands the stricken king, and to his eyes
Such tears as old men weep, yet shed not, rise:
Lifting his head at last, as from a trance, he sighs.
'Beautiful ever, O Isolt, wast thou,
And beautiful art thou now,
Though never again shall I, reproaching thee,
Make thy proud head more beautiful to me;
But this is the last reproach, and this the last
Forgiveness that thou hast.
Lost is the lost, Isolt, and past the past!
O Tristram, no more shalt thou need to hide
Thy thought from my thought, sitting at my side,
Nor need to wrestle sore
With thy great love and with thy fixed oath,
For now Death leaves thee loyal unto both,
Even as thou wouldst have been, for evermore.
Now, after all thy pain, thy brow looks glad,
But I lack all things that I ever had,
My wife, my friend, yea, even my jealous rage,
And empty is the house of my old age.
Behold, I have laboured all my days to part
These two, that were the dearest to my heart
Isolt, I would have fenced thee from men's sight,
My treasure, that I found so very fair,
The treasure I had taken with a snare
To keep thee mine, thus was my life's delight.
And now the end is come, alone I stand,
And the hand that lies in thine is not my hand '

Nothing is Enough.

Nothing is enough!
No, though our all be spent —
Heart's extremest love,
Spirit's whole intent,
All that nerve can feel,
All that brain invent, —
Still beyond appeal
Will Divine Desire
Yet more excellent
Precious cost require
Of this mortal stuff, —
Never be content
Till ourselves be fire,
Nothing is enough!

FROM The Idols

Once, only once, never again, never,
The idle curve my hand traces in air,
The first flush on the cloud lost in the morning's height,
Meeting of the eyes and tremble of delight,
Before the heart is aware
Gone! to return never again, never!

Futurity flows toward me, all things come
Smooth-flowing, and ere this pulse beat they are bound
In fixity that no repenting power can free,
They are with Egypt and with Nineveh,
Cold as a grave in the ground;
And still, undated, all things toward me come.

Why is all strange? Why do I not grow used?
The ripple upon the stream that nothing stays,
The bough above, in glory of warm light waving slow,
Trouble me, enchant me, as with the stream I flow

Lost into the endless days.
Why is all strange? Why do I not grow used?

Eternity! Where heard I that still word?
Like one that, moving through a foreign street,
Has felt upon him bent from far some earnest look,
Yet sees not whence, and feigns that he mistook,
I marvel at my own heart-beat.
Eternity! how learnt I that far word?

HILAIRE BELLOC

Hannaker Mill

Sally is gone that was so kindly,
Sally is gone from Hannaker Hill
And the briar grows ever since then so blindly
And ever since then the clipp 1911,
And the sweeps have fallen from Hannaker Mill

Hannaker Hill is in desolation
Ruin a-top and a field unploughed,
And Spirits that call on a falling morning,
Spirits that loved her calling aloud
Spirits abroad in a windy cloud

Spirits that call and no one answers,
Hannaker's down and E. J. J. J. J.
Wind and thistle for pop and dandelion,
And never a ploughman to till the soil,
Never a ploughman. Never a

T. STURGE MOORE

Reason Enough

'Who knows what a man may think?
To whom do the birds confide
Whether she will have tears to drink
And an hungry heart to hide?
Come, bandage your eyes,
Give ear though he lies
For milkmaids and queens and gipsy-princesses
Dream and kiss blindfold or starve upon guesses'

She sang these words and curtseyed my heart said
That though all heard my face alone was red, -
Though all hands clapped her mine alone kept still, -
Yet I perchance to praise had the best will
Now sails she, like a spirit taking leave,
Through those glass doors to where the gardens gloom
While dim stars filter through the filmy eve
Would she walk lonely through sweet solemn places?
She should be viewed while their spell on her face is,
Break free, my soul, good manners are thy tomb!

WALTER DE LA MARE

The Scribe

What lovely things
Thy hand hath made
The smooth-plumed bird
In its emerald shade,

The seed of the grass,
The speck of stone
Which the wayfaring ant
Surs – and hastes on !

Though I should sit
By some tarn in thy hulls,
Using its ink
- As the spirit wills
To write of Earth's wonder,
Its live, willed things,
Fht would the ages
On soundless wings
Ere unto Z
My pen drew nigh,
Leviathan told,
And the honey-fly:
And still would remain
My wit to try –
My worn reeds broken,
The dark tarn dry,
All words forgotten -
Thou, Lord, and I.

The Cage

Thou angel face! – like a small exquisite cage,
Such as some old Chinese
Once spent his love and skill on – youth to age
In hope its destined prisoner to please,
And then had empty left, since he had heard
What death would do in setting free the bird.

Love Well

When I know a girl – of old time,
Shall no more a –

Nor the rain make lamentation
 When the wind sighs,
 How will fare the world whose wonder
 Was the very proof of me?
 Memory fades, must the remembered
 Perishing be?

Oh, when this my dust surrenders
 Hand, foot, lip, to dust again,
 May these loved and loving faces
 Please other men!
 May the rusting harvest hedgerow
 Still the Traveller's Joy entwine,
 And as happy children gather
 Posies once mine

Look thy last on all things lovely,
 Every hour. Let no night
 Seal thy sense in deathly slumber
 Till to delight
 Thou have paid thy utmost blessing,
 Since that all things thou wouldst praise
 Beauty took from those who loved them
 In other days.

The Song of the Mad Prince

Who said, 'Peacock Pie'?
 The old King to the sparrow
 Who said, 'Crops are ripe'?
 Rust to the harrow
 Who said, 'Where sleeps she now?'
 Where rests she now her head,
 Bathed in eve's loveliness? —
 That's what I said

Who said, 'Ay, mum's the word?'
 Sexton to willow

Who said, 'Green dusk for dreams,
 Moss for a pillow'?
 Who said, 'All Time's delight
 Hath she for narrow bed,
 Life's troubled bubble broken'?
 That's what I said.

GORDON BOTTOMLEY

Eager Spring

Whirl, snow, on the blackbird's chatter;
 You will not hinder his song to come.
 East wind, Sleepless, you cannot scatter
 Quince-bud, almond-bud,
 Little grape-hyacinth's
 Clustering brood,
 Nor unfurl the tips of the plum.
 No half-born stalk of a lily stops;
 There is sap in the storm-torn bush,
 And, ruffled by gusts in a snow-blurred copse
 'Pity to wait' sings a thrush.

Love, there are few Springs left for us;
 They go, and the count of them as they go
 Makes surer the count that is left for us.
 More than the East wind, more than the snow
 I would put back these hours that bring
 Buds and bees and are lost;
 I would hold the night and the frost,
 To save for us one more Spring

'I am Tired of the Wind - . . '

I am tired of the wind -
 Oh, wind, wind, be quiet ...

I am burdened by the days
Of wailing and long riot.
The heavy trees are thinned,
The clouds lose their ways ...
There's no rest in my mind

When the wind falls the rain falls,
The air has no more breath.
The ceaseless 'Hush' of rain
Is what eternity saith
The hills grown near and tall
Let down a musty mane ...
Endlessness weighs on all.

JOHN MASEFIELD

The Yarn of the 'Loch Achray'

The *Loch Achray* was a clipper tall
With seven-and-twenty hands in all
Twenty to hand and reef and haul,
A skipper to sail and mates to bawl
'Tally on to the tackle-fall,
Heave now 'n' start her, heave 'n' pawl!
Hear the yarn of a sailor,
An old yarn learned at sea

Her crew were shipped and they said 'Farewell,
So-long, my Tottie, my lovely gell,
We sail to-day if we fetch to hell,
It's time we tackled the wheel a spell.'
Hear the yarn of a sailor,
An old yarn learned at sea.

The dockside loafers talked on the quay
The day that she towed down to sea.

Nose between paws, to hear the surf
Of wind in the beeches drowsily.
There was our fox bred lustily
Three years before, and there he berthed,
Under the beech-roots snugly earthed,
With a roof of flint and a floor of chalk
And ten bitten hens' heads each on its stalk,
Some rabbits' paws, some fur from scuts,
A badger's corpse and a smell of guts

Port of Holy Peter

The blue laguna rocks and quivers,
Dull gurgling eddies twist and spin,
The climate does for people's livers,
It's a nasty place to anchor in
Is Spanish port,
Fever port,
Port of Holy Peter.

The town begins on the sea-beaches,
And the town's mad with the stinging flies,
The drinking water's mostly leeches,
It's a far remove from Paradise
Is Spanish port,
Fever port,
Port of Holy Peter.

There's sand-bagging and throat-slitting,
And quiet graves in the sea slime,
Stabbing, of course, and rum-hitting,
Dirt, and drink, and stink, and crime,
In Spanish port,
Fever port,
Port of Holy Peter.

All the day the wind's blowing
From the sick swamp below the hulls,

All the night the plague's growing,
And the dawn brings the fever chills,
In Spanish port,
Fever port,
Port of Holy Peter.

You get a thirst there's no slaking,
You get the chills and fever-shakes,
Tongue yellow and head aching,
And then the sleep that never wakes
And all the year the heat's baking,
The sea rots and the earth quakes,
In Spanish port,
Fever port,
Port of Holy Peter

WILFRID GIBSON

By the Weir

A scent of esparto grass — and again I recall
The hour we spent by the weir of the paper-mill,
Watching together the curving thunderous fall
Of frothing amber, bemused by the roar until
My mind was as blank as the speckless sheets that wound
On the hot steel ironing rollers perpetually turning
In the humming dark rooms of the mill—all sense and discerning
By the stunning and dazzling oblivion of hill-waters drowned

And my heart was empty of memory, hope, and desire
Till, rousing, I looked afresh on your face as you gazed —
Behind you an old gnarled fruit-tree in one still fire
Of innumerable flame in the sun of October blazed,
Scarlet and gold that the first white frost would spill
With eddying flicker and patter of dead leaves falling —

I looked on your face as an outcast from Eden recalling
A vision of Eve as she dallied, bewildered and still,

By the serpent-encircled Tree of Knowledge that flamed
With gold and scarlet of good and evil, her eyes
Rapt on the river of life: then bright and untamed
By the labour and sorrow and fear of a world that dies,
Your ignorant eyes looked up into mine; and I knew
That never our hearts should be one till your young lips had
tasted

The core of the bitter-sweet fruit, and, wise and toil-wasted,
You should stand at my shoulder an outcast from Eden too.

OLIVER ST. JOHN GOGARTY

Per Iter Tenebriosum

Enough! Why should a man bemoan
A Fate that leads the natural way
Or think himself a worthier one
Than those who braved it in the
If only gladiators died,
Or heroes, Death would be his
But have not little maidens gone
And Lesbia's sparrow — all alone

'Our Friends Go With Us

Our friends go with us as we go
Down the long path where Beauty leads,
Where all we love forgoethers, so
Why should we fear to join our friends?

Who would survive them to outlast
His children; to outwear his fame —

Left when the Triumph has gone past –
To win from Age, not Time, a name?

Then do not shudder at the knife
That Death's indifferent hand drives home,
But with the Strivers leave the Strife,
Nor, after Cæsar, skulk in Rome

ALFRED NOYES

Seagulls on the Serpentine

Memory, out of the mist, in a long slow ripple
Breaks, blindly, against the shore
The mist has buried the town in its own oblivion
This, this is the sea once more.

Mist – mist – brown mist; but a sense in the air of snow-flakes!
I stand where the ripples die,
Lift up an arm and wait, till my lost ones know me,
Wheel overhead, and cry.

Salt in the eyes, and the seagulls, mewing and swooping,
Snatching the bread from my hand,
Brushing my hand with their breasts, in swift caresses
To show that they understand

Oh, why are you so afraid? We are all of us exiles!
Wheel back in your clamorous rings!
We have all of us lost the sea, and we all remember
But you – have wings

HERBERT E. PALMER

The Fiddler and the Girl

But the root of the matter is I am growing old,
And kicking at the barriers. There's grey in my hair,
An ice-cold sediment dropping through my veins,
My body has lost its spring, my brain its swiftness;
Poor am I as a mouse in a timber-yard,
And I am glad that there must come an End.

I lived on hope once; felt my spirit uplifted
By some dream-prospect of established greatness,
Hoped for a Crown and wore it, Power and was rich;
Possessed through every misfortune and restraint;
In Desolation was a kind of king.
The regal Maillou built not firmer than I,
For Getting was just Hoping. Now Life's different.
All's going away, fading, and slipping from me,
And Death seems friendly.

But then, yesterday,
As I sat fiddling on my slackened heartstrings,
Brooding and biting, wishing Death would take me,
In squalid disillusion of tired spirit
Tracing upon the ever-perishing page
"An acid sonnet with some malice in it,
There stole on me a hand — as if from Heaven —
Your hand. — You entered, and stood looking at me
And now my fiddle-strings grow taut again,
And there's sweet music nestling in the frame

So I can say, "To the winds with Hope! What's Hope!"
Say it unscathed, set free from wrath and pain.
What's Hope to me when the instrument is speaking!
Only by this I pay my lease of life.
My fiddle sings! Let hopes die where they soared.

Oh, I'll not chide you for your swift intrusion!
Nor make you shy that you have given me kindness
As senseless as the sun's tap on the hill
Or the soft-footed south wind's wanderings.
Heaven's sense it was, as sudden as wind or sun;
Yet timely, just a touch from the blue sky.

And the root of the matter is I am growing old
And you've half saved me — No! it is not Passion
If it should ever shake you, make no sign,
Nor let your thought run on my slain discretion
That I should sing of you 'neath sun or star,
You the Sun's flag, for I kneel down to the Sun
And the whole curving radiance of blue sky,
That breadth that holds all Wonder and pure Reason
Though there's a stretch of severing years between us,
Deep chasms of night and tired experience,
You a fair child, and I pushed back by Time.

No! there's no union of our outward selves,
The mortal trappings of the central sense,
You so aglow, I withering, you the wild rose,
Song's eglantine, the hyacinth cupola,
Or the juniper, Elijah's cloaking tower,
Any fair flower that's fragrant in the Spring,
The Spring itself, and then the Sun of Spring

You were all that to me, like a maid to a lover,
Touching my darkness with soft kindling fingers,
The rays of your spirit shining through my spirit
Till I was pinned to Heaven and the light again,
I Earth's sad clod, and you a shaft from the Sun

How shall I thank you? Praise what lies beyond you
And all about you, and in the heart of Day,
Do it in this, the bow along the wire,
Scattering a trail of music on the silence
As I press forward, acolyte, and knowing

I can do nothing save respond and follow
 As the Earth follows the Sun, yet does not follow —
 Its worn face tilting to the fiery radiance —
 Swinging around in the wide severing void.

But I'd speak plainer, change the speech's figure.
 The body's between us, that's the actual severance,
 Yet almost nothing if I break with Time
 And let the clean stripped spirit touch the spirit.
 In any thousand years what's death and change!
 What's blight and age, or any sudden thing
 That starts new life out of life's perishing!

There are no walls between us, only chasms,
 The abysses of the flesh, the sinews' cleavage,
 (Both voice and sight go out upon the uplands)
 And these will close as they have closed before.
 The Spirit-summit towers firm through Death and Change.
 And I'll see plainer ere the century's gone,
 And know what stole upon me in strange guise
 For every Spring it comes — shakes me, then goes

Rock Pilgrim

Let the damned ride their earwigs to Hell, but let me not join them.
 For why should I covet the tide, or in meanness purloin them?
 They are sick, they have chosen the path of their apple-green folly.
 I will turn to my mountains of light, and my mauve melancholy.

Let their hands get the primrose — God wreathe me! — of lowland
 - and lagland,

For me the small yellow tormentil of heath-hull and crag-land.
 Man's days are as grass, his thought but as thistle-seed wind-sown;
 I will plod up the pass, and nourish the turf with my shin-bone.

I should stay for a day, I should seek in high faith to reclaim
 them!
 But the threadbare beat straw, and the hole in my shirt will enflame
 them.

They are blinder than moles, for they see but the flies in God's honey.

And they eat off their soles; and they kneel to the Moloch of Money.

They have squeezed my mouth dumb, their clutch for a year yet
may rankle

I will tie Robin Death to my side, with his claw on my ankle.

Let them come, stick and drum, and assail me across the grey
boulders.

I will flutter my toes, and rattle the screes on their shoulders.

Let the damned get to Hell and be quick, while decision is early.

I will tie a red rose to my stick, and plant my feet squarely.

My back shall be blind on their spite, and my rump on their folly,

I will plod up the ridge to the right, past the crimson-green holly.

JAMES JOYCE

Strings in the Earth

Strings in the earth and air

Make music sweet,

Strings by the river where

The willows meet.

There's music along the river

For Love wanders there,

Pale flowers on his mantle,

Dark leaves on his hair

All softly playing,

With head to the music bent,

And fingers straying

Upon an instrument

JAMES STEPHENS

The Centaurs

Playing upon the hill three centaurs were!
They lifted each a hoof! They stared at me!
And stamped the dust!

They stamped the dust! They snuffed upon the air!
And all their movements had the fierce glee
Of power, and pride, and lust!

Of power and pride and lust! Then, with a shout,
They tossed their heads, and wheeled, and galloped round,
In furious brotherhood!

In furious brotherhood! Around, about,
They charged, they swerved, they leaped!
Then, bound on bound,
They raced into the wood!

The Main-deep

The long-rolling,
Steady-pouring,
Deep-trenchéd
Green billów:

The wide-topped,
Unbróken,
Green-glacid,
Slow-sliding,

Cold-flushing,
— On — on — on —
Chill-rushing,
Hush — hushing,
... Hush — hushing .

ANDREW YOUNG

Last Snow

Although the snow still lingers
Heaped on the ivy's blunt webbed fingers
And painting tree-trunks on one side,
Here in this sunlit ride
The fresh unchristened things appear,
Leaf, spathe and stem,
With crumbs of earth clinging to them
To show the way they came,
But no flower yet to tell their name,
And one green spear
Stabbing a dead leaf from below
Kills winter at a blow.

Culbin Sands

Here lay a fair fat land,
But now its townships, kirks, graveyards
Beneath bald hills of sand
Lie buried deep as Babylonian shards
But gales may blow again;
And like a sandglass turned about
The hills in a dry rain
Will flow away and the old land look out,
And where now hedgehog delves
And conies hollow their long caves
Houses will build themselves
And tombstones rewrite names on dead men's graves

Autumn

The leaves hang on the boughs
 Filemot, ochreous,
 Or fall and strangely greet
 Green blades of winter wheat.
 The long buds of the beech
 Point where they cannot reach.

A sad Telemachus,
 I stand under the boughs,
 Patient Pênelope,
 Her heart across the sea,
 Another year unweaves
 Her web of wasted leaves.

Is bud and leaf and flower
 All we are waiting for?
 But we shall wait again
 When these are gone, and then
 When they are gone and gone
 Penelope alone

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Falling Asleep

Voices moving about in the quiet house
 Thud of feet and a muffled shutting of doors
 Everyone yawning Only the clocks are alert

Out in the night there's autumn-smelling gloom
 Crowded with whispering trees; across the park
 A hollow cry of hounds like lonely bells:
 And I know that the clouds are moving across the moon,
 The low, red, rising moon. Now herons call

And wrangle by their pool, and hooting owls
Sail from the wood above pale stooks of oats

Waiting for sleep, I drift from thoughts like these;
And where to-day was dream-like, build my dreams.
Music ... there was a bright white room below,
And someone singing a song about a soldier,
One hour, two hours ago and soon the song
Will be '*last night*'; but now the beauty swings
Across my brain, ghost of remembered chords
Which still can make such radiance in my dream
That I can watch the marching of my soldiers,
And count their faces, faces, sunlit faces

Falling asleep the herons, and the hounds
September in the darkness; and the world
I've known, all fading past me into peace

Presences Perfected

I looked on that prophetic land
Where, manifested by their powers,
Presences perfected stand
Whom night and day no more command
With shine and shadows of earthly hours

I saw them Numberless they stood
Half-way toward heaven, that men might mark
The grandeur of their ghosthood
Burning divinely on the dark

Names had they none. Through spirit alone
They triumphed, the makers of mankind,
Whose robes like flames were round them blown
By winds which raved from the unknown
Erebus of earth's ancestral mind

EDWIN MUIR

The Riders

At the dead centre of the boundless plain
Does our way end? Our horses pace and pace
Like steeds forever labouring on a shield,
Keeping their solitary heraldic courses.

Our horses move on such a ground, for them
Perhaps the progress is all ease and pleasure,
But it is heavy work for us, the riders,
Whose hearts have flown so far ahead they are lost
Long past all finding
While we sit staring at the same horizon.

Time has such curious stretches, we are told,
And generation after generation
May travel them, sad stationary journey,
Of what device, what meaning?

Yet these coursers
Have seen all and will see all. Suppliantly
The rocks will melt, the sealed horizons fall
Before their onset – and the places
Our hearts have hid in will be viewed by strangers
Sitting where we are, breathing the foreign air
Of the new realm they have inherited.

But we shall fall here on the plain.

It may be
These steeds would stumble and the long road end
(So legend says) if they should lack their riders.

But then a rider
Is always easy to find. Yet we fill a saddle
At least. We sit where others have sat before us
And others will sit after us

It cannot be

These animals know their riders, mark the change
When one makes way for another. It cannot be
They know this wintry wilderness from spring
For they have come from regions dreadful past
All knowledge They have borne upon their saddles
Forms fiercer than the tiger, borne them calmly
As they bear us now.

And so we do not hope
That their great coal-black glossy hides
Should keep a glimmer of the autumn light
We still remember, when our limbs were weightless
As red leaves on a tree, and our silvery breaths
Went on before us like new-risen souls
Leading our empty bodies through the air
A princely dream Now all that golden country
Is razed as bare as Troy We cannot return,
And shall not see the kingdom of our heirs

These beasts are mortal, and we who fall so lightly,
Fall so heavily, are, it is said, immortal
Such knowledge should armour us against all change,
And this monotony Yet these worn saddles
Have powers to charm us to obliviousness
They were appointed for us, and the scent of the ancient
leather
Is strong as a spell So we must mourn or rejoice
For this our seat, our station, our inheritance,
As if it were all This plain all. This journey all.

The Journey

First in the North The black sea-tangle beaches,
Brine-bitter stillness, tablet strewn morass,
Tail women against the sky with heads covered,
The witch's house below the black-toothed mountain,
Wave-echo in the roofless chapel,

A race whose fabled skill in falconry
Was used on the small song-birds and a winged
And blinded Destiny ... I think that only
Winged ones know the highest eyrie is so lonely.

There in a land, austere and elegant,
The castle seemed an arabesque in music;
We moved in an hallucination born
Of silence, which like music gave us lotus
To eat, perfuming lips and our long eyelids
As we trailed over the sad summer grass,
Or sat beneath a smooth and mournful tree.

And Time passed, suavely, imperceptibly.

But Dagobert and Peregrine and I
Were children then; we walked like shy gazelles
Among the music of the thin flower-bells.
And life still held some promise, — never ask
Of what, — but life seemed less a stranger, then,
Than ever after in this cold existence.
I always was a little outside life, —
And so the things we touch could comfort me,
I loved the shy dreams we could hear and see —
For I was like one dead, like a small ghost,
A little cold air wandering and lost

All day within the straw-roofed arabesque
Of the towered castle and the sleepy gardens wandered
We; those delicate paladins the waves
Told us fantastic legends that we pondered

And the soft leaves were breasted like a dove.
Crooning old mournful tales of untrue love.

When night came, sounding like the growth of trees,
My great-grandmother bent to say good-night,
And the enchanted moonlight seemed transformed
Into the silvery tinkling of an old

And gentle music-box that played a tune
Of Circean enchantments and far seas,
Her voice was lulling like the splash of these
When she had given me her good-night kiss,
There, in her lengthened shadow, I saw this
Old military ghost with mayfly whiskers, —
Poor harmless creature, blown by the cold wind,
Boasting of unseen unreal victories
To a harsh unbelieving world unkind, —
For all the battles that this warrior fought
Were with cold poverty and helpless age —
His spoils were shelters from the winter's rage.
And so for ever through his braggart voice,
Through all that martial trumper's sound, his soul
Wept with a little sound so pitiful,
Knowing that he is outside life for ever
With no one that will warm or comfort him
He is not even dead, but Death's buffoon
On a bare stage, a shrunken pantaloon
His military banner never fell,
Nor his account of victories, the stories
Of old apocryphal misfortunes, glories
Which comforted his heart in later life
When he was the Napoleon of the schoolroom
And all the victories he gained were over
Little boys who would not learn to spell

All day within the sweet and ancient gardens
He had my childish self for audience —
Whose body flat and strange, whose pale straight hair
Made me appear as though I had been drowned —
(We all have the remote air of a legend) —
And Dagobert my brother whose large strength,
Great body and grave beauty still reflect
The Angevin dead kings from whom we spring,
And sweet as the young tender winds that stir
In thickets when the earliest flower-bells sing

The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.
Then the camel men cursing and grumbling
And running away, and wanting their liquor and women,
And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters,
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly
And the villages dirty and charging high prices.
A hard time we had of it.
At the end we preferred to travel all night,
Sleeping in snatches,
With the voices singing in our ears, saying
That this was all folly.
Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,
Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation;
With a running stream and a water-mill beating the darkness,
And three trees on the low sky,
And an old white horse galloped away in the meadow.

Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the lintel,
Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver,
And feet kicking the empty wine-skins.
But there was no information, and so we continued
And arrived at evening, not a moment too soon
Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory.

All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set down
This set down
Thus were we led all that way for
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,
But had thought they were different; this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death.

Rhapsody on a Windy Night

Twelve o'clock.
Along the reaches of the street
Held in a lunar synthesis,
Whispering lunar incantations
Dissolve the floors of memory
And all its clear relations,
Its divisions and precisions,
Every street lamp that I pass
Beats like a fatalistic drum,
And through the spaces of the dark
Midnight shakes the memory
As a madman shakes a dead geranium.

Half-past one,
The street-lamp sputtered,
The street-lamp muttered,
The street-lamp said, 'Regard that woman
Who hesitates toward you in the light of the door
Which opens on her like a grin.
You see the border of her dress
Is torn and stained with sand,
And you see the corner of her eye
Twists like a crooked pin '

The memory throws up high and dry
A crowd of twisted things,
A twisted branch upon the beach
Eaten smooth, and polished
As if the world gave up
The secret of its skeleton,
Stiff and white.
A broken spring in a factory yard,
Rust that clings to the form that the strength has left
Hard and curled and ready to snap

Half-past two,
The street-lamp said,

'Remark the cat which flattens itself in the gutter,
Slips out its tongue
And devours a morsel of rancid butter.'
So the hand of the child, automatic,
Slipped out and picketed a toy that was running along the quay
I could see nothing behind that child's eye.
I have seen eyes in the street
Trying to peer through lighted shutters,
And a crab one afternoon in a pool,
An old crab with barnacles on his back,
Gripped the end of a stick which I held him.

Half-past three,
The lamp sputtered,
The lamp muttered in the dark
The lamp hummed.
'Regard the moon,
La lune ne garde aucune rancune,
She winks a feeble eye,
She smiles into corners.
She smooths the hair of the grass.
The moon has lost her memory.
A washed-out smallpox cracks her face,
Her hand twists a paper rose,
That smells of dust and eau de Cologne,
She is alone
With all the old nocturnal smells
That cross and cross across her brain.'
'The reminiscence comes
Of sunless dry geraniums
And dust in crevices,
Smells of chestnuts in the streets,
And female smells in shuttered rooms,
And cigarettes in corridors
And cocktail smells in bars.

The lamp said,
'Four o'clock,

Here is the number on the door.

Memory!

You have the key,

The little lamp spreads a ring on the stair,

Mount

The bed is open, the tooth-brush hangs on the wall,

Put your shoes at the door, sleep, prepare for life.'

The last twist of the knife.

The Hollow Men

A Penny for the Old Guy

I

We are the hollow men

We are the stuffed men

Leaning together

Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!

Our dried voices, when

We whisper together

Are quiet and meaningless

As wind in dry glass

Or rats' feet over broken glass

In our dry cellar

Shape without form, shade without colour,

Paralysed force, gesture without motion,

Those who have crossed

With direct eyes, to death's other Kingdom

Remember us — if at all — not as lost

Violent souls, but only

As the hollow men

The stuffed men

II

Eyes I dare not meet in dreams

In death's dream kingdom

These do not appear :
There, the eyes are
Sunlight on a broken column
There, is a tree swinging
And voices are
In the wind's singing
More distant and more solemn
Than a fading star.

Let me be no nearer
In death's dream kingdom
Let me also wear
Such deliberate disguises
Rat's coat, crowskin, crossed staves
In a field
Behaving as the wind behaves
No nearer —

Not that final meeting
In the twilight kingdom

III

This is the dead land
This is cactus land
Here the stone images
Are raised, here they receive
The supplication of a dead man's hand
Under the twinkle of a fading star.

Is it like this
In death's other kingdom
Walking alone
At the hour when we are
Trembling with tenderness
Lips that would kiss
Form prayers to broken stone

IV

The eyes are not here
There are no eyes here
In this valley of dying stars
In this hollow valley
This broken jaw of our lost kingdoms

In this last of meeting places
We grope together
And avoid speech
Gathered on this beach of the tumid river

Sightless, unless
The eyes reappear
As the perpetual star
Multifoliate rose
Of death's twilight kingdom
The hope only
Of empty men.

V

*Here we go round the prickly pear
Prickly pear prickly pear
Here we go round the prickly pear
At five o'clock in the morning*

Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the Shadow

FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM

Between the conception
And the creation
Between the emotion
And the response
Falls the Shadow

LIFE IS VERY LONG

Between the desire
And the spasm
Between the potency
And the existence
Between the essence
And the descent
Falls the Shadow

FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM

For Thine is
Life is
For Thine is the

*This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang but a whimper.*

F. W. HARVEY

Ducks

I

From troubles of the world
I turn to ducks,
Beautiful comical things
Sleeping or curled
Their heads beneath white wings
By water cool,
Or finding curious things
To eat in various mucks
Beneath the pool,
Tails uppermost, or waddling

Sailor-like on the shores
 Of ponds, or paddling
 – Left! right! – with fanlike feet
 Which are for steady oars
 When they (white galleys) float
 Each bird a boat
 Rippling at will the sweet
 Wide waterway.
 When night is fallen *you* creep
 Upstairs, but drakes and dillies
 Nest with pale water-stars,
 Moonbeams and shadow bars,
 And water-lilies
 Fearful too much to sleep
 Since they've no locks
 To click against the teeth
 Of weasel and fox
 And warm beneath
 Are eggs of cloudy green
 Whence hungry rats and lean
 Would stealthily suck
 New life, but for the mien.
 The bold ferocious mien
 Of the mother-duck.

II

Yes, ducks are valiant things
 On nests of twigs and straws,
 And ducks are soothy things
 And lovely on the lake
 When that the sunlight draws
 Thereon their pictures dim
 In colours cool
 And when beneath the pool
 They dabble, and when they swim
 And make their rippling rings,
 O ducks are beautiful things!

But ducks are comical things —
 As comical as you
 Quack!
 They waddle round, they do.
 They eat all sorts of things,
 And then they quack.
 By barn and stable and stack
 They wander at their will,
 But if you go too near
 They look at you through black
 Small topaz-tinted eyes
 And wish you ill.
 Triangular and clear
 They leave their curious track
 In mud at the water's edge,
 And there amid the sedge
 And slime they gobble and peer
 Saying 'Quack! quack!'

III

When God had finished the stars and whirl of coloured suns
 He turned His mind from big things to fashion little ones,
 Beautiful tiny things (like daisies) He made, and then
 He made the comical ones in case the minds of men
 Should stiffen and become
 Dull, humourless and glum.
 And so forgetful of their Maker be
 As to take even themselves — *quite seriously*.
 Caterpillars and cats are lively and excellent puns.
 All God's jokes are good — even the practical ones!
 And as for the duck, I think God must have smiled a bit
 Seeing those bright eyes blink on the day He fashioned it.
 And He's probably laughing still at the sound that came out of its
 bill!

W. J. TURNER

Romance

When I was but thirteen or so
I went into a golden land,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Took me by the hand
My father died, my brother too,
They passed like fleeting dreams,
I stood where Popocatpetl
In the sunlight gleams
I dimly heard the Master's voice
And boys far off at play,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Had stolen me away.
I walked in a great golden dream
To and fro from school –
Shining Popocatpetl
The dusty streets did rule
I walked home with a gold dark boy
And never a word I'd say,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Had taken my speech away
I gazed entranced upon his face
Fairer than any flower –
O shining Popocatpetl
It was thy magic hour :
The houses, people, traffic seemed
Thin fading dreams by day,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
They had stolen my soul away!

India

They hunt, the velvet tigers in the jungle,
The spotted jungle full of shapeless patches –
Sometimes they're leaves, sometimes they're hanging flowers,
Sometimes they're hot gold patches of the sun.
They hunt, the velvet tigers in the jungle!

What do they hunt by glimmering pools of water,
By the round silver Moon, the Pool of Heaven? –
In the striped grass, amid the barkless trees –
The stars scattered like eyes of beasts above them!

What do they hunt, their hot breath scorching insects?
Insects that blunder blindly in the way,
Vividly fluttering – they also are hunting,
Are glittering with a tiny ecstasy!

The grass is flaming and the trees are growing,
The very mud is gurgling in the pools,
Green toads are watching, crimson parrots flying,
Two pairs of eyes meet one another glowing –
They hunt, the velvet tigers in the jungle.

Silence

It was a bright day and all the trees were still
In the deep valley, and the dim Sun glowed;
The clay in hard-baked fire along the hill
Leapt through dark trunks to apples green and gold,
Smooth, hard and cold, they shone like lamps of stone

They were bright bubbles bursting from the trees,
Swollen and still among the dark green boughs;
On their bright skins the shadows of the leaves
Seemed the faint ghosts of summers long since gone,
Faint ghosts of ghosts, the dreams of ghostly eyes.

There was no sound between those breathless hills.
Only the dim Sun hung there, nothing moved;
The thronged, massed, crowded multitude of leaves
Hung like dumb tongues that loll and gasp for air
The grass was thick and still, between the trees.

There were big apples lying on the ground,
Shining, quite still, as though they had been stunned
By some great violent spirit stalking through,
Leaving a deep and supernatural calm
Round a dead beetle upturned in a furrow.

A valley filled with dark, quiet, leaf-thick trees,
Loaded with green, cold, faintly shining suns,
And in the sky a great dim burning disc ! -
Madness it is to watch these twisted trunks
And to see nothing move and hear no sound !

Let's make a noise, Hey! . . Hey! . Hullo! Hullo !

OSBERT SITWELL

Prologue to England Reclaimed

Now watch these phantoms,
How they tremble into being,
Amble, tremble into ample phantoms,
Tumble into their small wants
- Such few desires,
Garden, food, fires -
Watch these phantoms
How they now are being,
Listening hearing,
Looking see
Loving fear

While to tinge their moods, stiff-jointed moods,
 The dumb, the sad, the sunset shadow
 Of the old house broods
 Alas, again, the ample phantoms tremble,
 Tumble and crumble out of their few needs —
 Crumble ... then crumple up.

On the Coast of Coromandel

On the coast of Coromandel
 Dance they to the tunes of Handel,
 Chorally, that coral coast
 Correlates the bone to ghost,
 Till word and limb and note seem one,
 Blending, binding act to tone.

All day long they point the sandal
 On the coast of Coromandel.
 Lemon-yellow legs all bare
 Pirouette to peruqued air
 From the first green shoots of morn,
 Cool as northern hunting-horn,
 Till the nightly tropic wind
 With its rough-tongued, grating rind
 Shatters the frail spires of spice.
 Imaged in the lawns of rice
 (Mirror-flat and mirror green
 Is that lovely water's sheen)
 Saraband and rigadoon
 Dance they through the purring noon,
 Whole the lacquered waves expand
 Golden dragons on the sand —
 Dragons that must, steaming, die
 From the hot sun's agony —
 When elephants, of royal blood,
 Plod to bed through lily mud,
 Then evening, sweet as any mango,
 Bids them do a gay fandango,

Minuet, jig or gavotte.
How they hate the turkey-trot,
The nautch-dance and the highland fling,
Just as they will never sing
Any music save by Handel
On the coast of Coromandel!

RICHARD CHURCH

Mud

Twenty years ago
My generation learned
To be afraid of mud
We watched its vileness grow,
Deeper and deeper churned
From earth, spirit, and blood

From earth, sweet-smelling enough
As moorland, field, and coast,
Firm beneath the corn,
Noble to the plough;
Purified by frost
Every winter morn

From blood, the invisible river
Pulsing from the hearts
Of patient man and beast
The healer and life-giver,
The union of parts;
The meaning of the feast.

From spirit, which is man
In triumphant mood,
Conquerer of fears,
Alchemist of pain

Changing bad to good;
Master of the spheres.

Earth, the king of space,
Blood, the king of time,
Spirit, their lord and god,
All tumbled from their place,
All trodden into slime,
All mingled into mud.

HERBERT READ

A Short Poem for Armistice Day

Gather or take fierce degree
trim the lamp set out for sea
here we are at the workman's entrance
clock in and shed your eminence.

Notwithstanding, work it diverse ways
work it diverse days, multiplying four digestions
here we make artificial flowers
of paper tin and metal thread

One eye one leg one arm one lung
a syncopated sick heart-beat
the record is not nearly worn
that weaves a background to our work.

I have no power therefore have patience
These flowers have no sweet scent
no lustre in the petal no increase
from fertilising flies and bees.

No seed they have no seed
their tendrils are of wire and grip

the buttonhole the lip
and never fade

And will not fade though life
and lustre go in genuine flowers
and men like flowers are cut
and withered on a stem
And will not fade a year or more
I stuck one in a candlestick
and there it clings about the socket
I have no power therefore have patience

Bombing Casualties Spam

Dolls' faces are rosier but these were children
their eyes not glass but gleaming gristle
dark lenses in whose quicksilver glances
the sunlight quivered These blenched lips
were warm once and bright with blood
but blood
held in a moist bleb of flesh
not spilt and spatter'd in tousled hair.

In these shadowy tresses
red petals did not always
thus clot and blacken to a scar.

These are dead faces
wasps' nests are not more wanly waxen
wood embers not so greyly ashen

They are laid out in ranks
like paper lanterns that have fallen
after a night of not
extinct in the dry morning air

LILIAN BOWES LYON

Pastoral

This field has buried men; is browed
With easy gold; day's Midas touch
Turns all to richness, only these were ploughed
By poverty under, pave a roofless church,
Kindle no saffron cloud.

These nothing want, are nameless loam.
But hungrier bones we knew as boys
Stand gauntly erect, or ground to brittle scum
Are grit in the machine that still destroys;
And wolves sing Harvest Home.

On evening lea unearth long sighs,
The lingering testament of their pain;
Tear open this sepulchred acre until they rise
And call Peace hypocrite, who dumbly stain
With blood her pastoral skies.

EDMUND BLUNDEN

The Pike

From shadows of rich oaks outpeer
The moss-green bastions of the weir,
Where the quick dipper forges
In elver-peopled crevices,
And a small runlet trickling down the sluice
Gossamer music tires not to unloose

Else round the broad pool's hush
 Nothing stirs,
 Unless sometime a straggling heifer crush
 Through the thronged spinney where the pheasant whirs,
 Or martins in a flash
 Come with wild mirth to dip their magical wings,
 While in the shallow some doomed bulrush swings
 At whose hid root the diver vole's teeth gnash
 And nigh this toppling reed, still as the dead
 - The great pike lies, the murderous patriarch,
 Watching the waterpit sheer-shelving dark,
 Where through the splash his lithe bright vassals thread

The rose-finned roach and blush bream
 And staring ruffe steal up the stream
 Hard by their gluttoned tyrant, now
 Still as a sunken bough.

He on the sandbank lies,
 Sunning himself long hours
 With stony gorgon eyes
 Westward the hot sun lowers

Sudden the grey pike changes, and, quivering, poises for slaughter,
 Intense terror wakens around him, the shoals scud awry, but
 there chances
 A chub unsuspecting, the prowling fins quicken, in fury he
 lances,
 And the miller that opens the hatch stands amazed at the whirl in
 the water

The Poor Man's Pig

Already fallen plum-bloom stars the green
 And apple-boughs as knarred as old toads' backs
 Wear their small roses ere a rose is seen,
 The building thrush watches old Job who stacks
 The bright-peeled osiers on the sunny fence,
 The pent sow grunts to hear him stumping by,
 And tries to push the bolt and scamper thence,
 But her ringed snout still keeps her to the sty

Then out he lets her run; away she snorts
In bundling gallop for the cottage door,
With hungry hubbub begging crusts and orts,
Then like a whirlwind bumping round once more;
Nuzzling the dog, making the pullets run,
And sulky as a child when her play's done.

F. R. HIGGINS

Father and Son

Only last week, walking the hushed fields
Of our most lovely Meath, now thinned by November,
I came to where the road from Laracor leads
To the Boyne river – that seemed more lake than river,
Stretched in uneasy light and stript of reeds.

And walking longside an old weir
Of my people's, where nothing stirs – only the shadowed
Leaden flight of a heron up the lean air –
I went unmanly with grief, knowing how my father,
Happy though captive in years, walked last with me there.

Yes, happy in Meath with me for a day
He walked, taking stock of herds huddled in their own breathing;
And naming colts, gusty as wind, once steered by his hand;
Lightnings winked in the eyes that were half shy in greeting
Old friends – the wild blades, when he gallivanted the land.

For that proud, wayward man now my heart breaks –
Breaks for that man whose mind was a secret eyrie,
Whose kind hand was sole signet of his race,
Who curbed me, scorned my green ways, yet increasingly
loved me
Till Death drew its grey blind down his face.

And yet I am pleased that even my reckless ways
Are living shades of his rich calms and passions —
Witnesses for him and for those faint namesakes
With whom now he is one, under yew branches,
Yes, one in a graven silence no bird breaks.

SACHEVERELL SITWELL

FROM *Agamemnon's Tomb*

All is degradation in the chambers of dead bones,
Nor marble, nor porphyry, but make it worse
For the mind sees, inside it, to the stained wet shroud
Where all else is dry, and only that is fluid,
So are carven tombs in the core to their cool marble,
The hollowed out heart of it, the inner cell,
All is degradation in the halls of the dead,
I never thought other things of death, until
The climb to Mycenæ, when the wind and rain
Stormed at the tombs, when the rocks were as clouds
Struck still in the hurricane, driven to the hillside,
And rain poured in torrents, all the air was water.
The wet grey Argolide wept below,
The winds wailed and tore their hair,
The plain of Argos mourned and was in mist,
In mist tossed and shaken, in a sea of wrack,
This was the place of weeping, the day of tears,
As if all the dead were here, in all their pain,
Not stilled, nor assuaged, but aching to the bone;
It was their hell, they had no other hope than this,
But not alone, it was not nothingness
The wind shrieked, the rain poured, the steep wet stones
Were a cliff in a whirlwind, by a raging sea,
Hidden by the rainstorm pelting down from heaven

To that hollow valley loud with melancholy;
But the dark hill opened. And it was the tomb.

A passage led into it, cut through the hill,
Echoing, rebounding with the million-ringing rain,
With walls, ever higher, till the giant lintel
Of huge stone, jagged and immense, rough-hewn
That held up the mountain: it was night within:
Silence and peace, nor sound of wind nor rain,
But a huge dome, glowing with the day from out
Let in by the narrow door, diffused by that,
More like some cavern under ocean's lips,
Fine and incredible, diminished in its stones,
For the hand of man had fitted them, of dwindling size,
Row after row, round all the hollow dome,
As scales of fish, as of the ocean's fins,
Pinned with bronze flowers that were, now, all fallen,
But the stones kept their symmetry, their separate shape
To the dome's high cupola of giant stone:
All was high and solemn in the cavern tomb,
If this was death, then death was poetry,
First architecture of the man-made years,
This was peace for the accursed Atridae.
Here lay Agamemnon in a cell beyond,
A little room of death, behind the solemn dome
Not burnt, nor confined, but laid upon the soil
With a golden mask upon his dead man's face
For a little realm of light within that shadowed room
And ever the sun came, every day of life,
Though less than star-point in that starry sky,
To the shadowed meridian, and sloped again,
Nor lit his armour, nor the mask upon his face,
For they burned in eternal night, they smouldered in it,
Season followed season, there was summer in the tomb,
Through hidden crevice, down that point of light,
Summer of loud wings and of the ghosts of blossom,
One by one, as harvesters, all heavy laden,

The bees sought their corridor into the dome
 With honey of the asphodel, the flower of death,
 Or thyme, rain-sodden, and more sweet for that,
 Here was their honeycomb, high in the roof,
 I heard sweet summer from their drumming wings,
 Though it wept and rained and was the time of tears,
 They made low music, they murmured in the tomb,
 As droning nuns through all a shuttered noon,
 Who prayed in this place of death, and knew it not
 How sweet such death, with honey from the flowers,
 A little air, a little light, and drone of wings,
 To long monotony, to prison of the tomb!
 But he did not know it His bones, picked clean,
 Were any other bones The trick is in our mind-
 They love not a bed, nor raiment for their bones,
 They are happy on cold stone or in the aching water,
 And neither care, nor care not, they are only dead
 It once was Agamemnon, and we think him happy
 O false, false hope! How empty his happiness,
 All for a fine cavern and the hum of bees

FROM *Bohemund, Prince of Antioch*

We walked in lemon-woods
 And in the orange-grove,
 And climbed through cactus to the villa of the dwarves,
 Laid out like a mandoline
 A wall was the shell of it,
 A low, round wall
 With monsters on the sky-line, on the rim of it,
 In parody of statues on a colonnade
 Not saints but satyrs, figurants of sin
 Dwarves with antlers, Falstaffs of the shadows,
 Giants with donkeys' heads,
 Moustached Hussars,
 Most, with guitars, for a mocking serenade

And the villa, in the midst of them,
With mirrored ball-room
And statues of ancestors in suits of marble
Talking from the walls;
This was his world, his Palagonia,
Who built the walls and had the statues cut,
While Sicily lay round it
With blue sea basking to the amber cliffs
And all the Conca d'Oro, all the Golden Shell,
Lit with winter light,
To Palermo, glittering.
Arabs brought the orange, brought the lemon to it,
And Moorish melon-dome and stalactite,
The desert honeycomb, the horn of plenty,
And Orient silk from valleys of the mulberry;
A Golden Age, soon faded, but the orange stayed
More lovely than tamarisk, or asphodel,
More lovely than the meadows of Theocritus,
His olive-groves, or the shining of the ilex;
And the Normans came to Sicily, the fair-haired race,
And made this their paradise far from the North,
As it was a heaven for the burning South,
An oasis, an island, a snow-white mountain,
Fire with a rind of snow
But the Golden Age tarnished,
The Hohenstaufen, dead,
Were rust of their blood and spoilt the land for Aragon,
The Norman race faded, there were no more heroes,
Sicily was shut unto itself again,
An isle of orange-groves, a name of poetry.

RUTH PITTER

Of Silence and the Air

Here where the cold pure air is filled with darkness
graced but by Hesper and a comet streaming,
censed by the clean smoke from a herdsman's hearthstone
I stand with silence.

void of desire, but full of contemplation
both of these herds and of the gods above them
mindful of these, and offering submission
to those immortal

Older than they, the frosty air about me
speaks to the flocks like careful age, like winter,
saying, Seek shelter to the gods, I know ye
and to me nothing.

save but that silence is the truth the silent
stars affirm nothing, and the lovely comet
silent impending, like a nymph translated
abides in heaven

Shall not I also stand and worship silence
till the cold enter, and the heart, the housewife,
spin no more, but sit down silent in the presence
of the eternal?

ROY CAMPBELL

The Zebras

From the dark woods that breathe of fallen showers,
Harnessed with level rays in golden reins,
The zebras draw the dawn across the plains
Wading knee-deep among the scarlet flowers.
The sunlight, zithering their flanks with fire,
Flashes between the shadows as they pass
Barred with electric tremors through the grass
Like wind along the gold strings of a lyre.

Into the flushed air snorting rosy plumes
That smoulder round their feet in drifting fumes,
With dove-like voices call the distant fillies,
While round the herds the stallion wheels his flight,
Engine of beauty volted with delight,
To roll his mare among the trampled lilies.

Toril

CROWD Another Bull! another Bull!

OX

You heard?

Your number's up: the people gave the word.

BULL

Feasted on flowers, the darling of the days,
To-day I've ghastly asphodels to graze,
Harsh sand to choke, and my own blood to swill,
Whose dewlap loved the golden-rolling rill,
When through the rushes, burnished like its tide,
The lovely cirrus of my thews would slide,
My heart flame-glazing, through the silken skin,
Joy of its mighty furnace lit within.

These crescent horns that scimitared the Moon,
These eyes that were the tinder of the noon —
All now to be cut down, and soon to trail
A sledge of carrion at a horse's tail!

Ox Flame in the flaming noon, I've seen you run
The Anvil of Toledo's now your Sun,
Whose furious aurora they unfold,
Beyond these gates, a roaring gale of gold,
Whose iron clangs for you, whose dawn you feel,
The target of its burnished ray of steel.

BULL Ox as you are, what should you know of this
Who never neared the verge of that abyss?

Ox Ox as I am, none better knows than I
Who led your father's father here to die
Declaiming clown, I am the mute, the wise,
Poets would read enigmas in my eyes
My being is confederate with pain
Mine to endure as yours is to complain,
I am the thinker, satisfied to know,
And bought this wisdom for a life of woe
Be brave, be patient, and reserve your breath

BULL But tell me what is blacker than this death?

Ox My impotence

BULL It was your soul that spoke —
More hideous than this martyrdom?

Ox The Yoke!

A. S. J. TESSIMOND

Earthfast

Architects plant their imagination, weld their poems on rock,
clamp them to the skidding rim of the world and anchor them down
to its core;
leave more than the poet's or painter's snail-bright trail on a friable
leaf;
can build their chrysalis round them – stand in their sculpture's
belly.

They see through stone, they cage and partition air, they crossrig
space
with footholds, planks for a dance; yet their maze, their flying
trapeze
is pinned to the centre. They write their euclidean music standing
with a hand on a cornice of cloud, themselves set fast, earth-square.

C. DAY LEWIS

The Conflict

I sang as one
Who on a tilting deck sings
To keep their courage up, though the wave hangs
That shall cut off their sun.

As storm-cocks sing,
Flinging their natural answer in the wind's teeth
And care not if it is waste of breath
Or birth-carol of spring.

As ocean-flyer clings
To height, to the last drop of spirit driving on
While yet ahead is land to be won
And work for wings.

Singing I was at peace,
Above the clouds, outside the ring
For sorrow finds a swift release in song
And pride its poise

Yet living here,
As one between two massing powers I live
Whom neutrality cannot save
Nor occupation cheer.

None such shall be left alive
The innocent wing is soon shot down,
And private stars fade in the blood-red dawn
Where two worlds strive.

The red advance of life
Contracts pride, calls out the common blood,
Beats song into a single blade,
Makes a depth-charge of grief.

Move then with new desires,
For where we used to build and love
Is no man's land, and only ghosts can live
Between two fires.

'Oh Subterranean Fires.'

Oh subterranean fires, break out!
Tornadoes, pity not
The petty bourgeois of the soul,
The middleman of God!

Who ruins farm and factory
To keep a private mansion

Is a bad landlord, he shall get
No honourable mention.

Who mobbed the kestrel out of the air,
Who made the tiger tame,
Who lost the blood's inheritance
And found the body's shame,

Who raised his hands to brand a Cam
And bless a submarine —
Time is up; the medicine man
Must take his medicine.

The winter evening holds her peace
And makes a crystal pause,
Frozen are all the streams of light,
Silent about their source.

Comrade, let us look to earth,
Be stubborn, act and sleep;
Here at our feet the lasting skull
Keeps a stiff upper lip.

Feeling the weight of a long winter,
Grimaces underground;
But never again will need to ask
Why spirit was flesh-bound.

And we whom winter days oppress
May find some work to hand;
Perfect our plans, renew parts,
Break hedges down, plough land.

So when primroses pave the way
And the sun warms the stone,
We may receive the exile spirit
Coming into its own.

A Time to Dance

For those who had the power
of the forest fires that burn
Leaving their source in ashes
to flush the sky with fire
Those whom a famous urn
could not contain, whose passion
Brimmed over the deep grave
and dazzled epitaphs
For all that have won us wings
to clear the tops of grief,
My friend who within me laughs
bids you dance and sing.

Some set out to explore
earth's limit, and little recked if
Never their feet came near it
outgrowing the need for glory.
Some aimed at a small objective
but the fierce updraught of their spirit
Forced them to the stars
Are honoured in public who built
The dam that tamed a river,
or holding the salient for hours
Against odds, cut off and killed,
are remembered by one survivor.

All these But most for those
whom accident made great,
As a radiant chance encounter
of cloud and sunlight grows
Immortal on the heart
whose gift, as the sudden bounty
Of a passing moment, enriches
the fulfilled eye for ever.
Their spirits float serene
above time's roughest reaches.

But their seed is in us and over
our lives they are evergreen.

RONALD BOTTRALL

To a Chinese Girl

Your grapnel eyes dredging my body through
Haul up the uncharted silt, efface
The mud flats of impeding residue.

Thus trenching you rive up my yesterdays.
Exposed to sun, your eastern sun, not mine,
Compromise shrivels in Confucian rays.

Fidly proportioned pigments will combine
In deeper values, but vague ampersands
Choke the lacunæ of our strict design.

Unhurrying time our universe expands,
We plot in vain the ever-changing centre,
Our grain-concorded star-strewn cloud disbands

And we are left, ourselves our own tormentor.
By dexterous montage photograms contrive
To bill east-west cohering as a centaur.

And overtly strike off the imperial gyve,
For the poised whip you have your amulet.
Blacking out details of your negative.

You decorously project a silhouette
But piercing through the envelope I defined
Clarity when your hair ran streaming jet,
Irradiated by a luminous wind.

WILLIAM EMPSON

Letter V

Not locus if you will but envelope,
Paths of light not atoms of good form,
Such tangent praise, less crashing, not less warm,
May gain more intimacy for less hope

Not the enclosed letter then, the spirited air,
The detached marble, not the discovered face,
I may praise so for truth as still for grace
The humility that will not hear or care.

You are a metaphor and they are lies
Or there true least where their knot chance unfurls;
You are the grit only of those glanced pearls
No acid now will melt back to small eyes

Wide-grasping glass in which to gaze alone
Your curve bars even fancy from its gates;
You are the map only of the divine states
You, made, not known, nor knowing in, make known

*

Yet if I love you but as cause unknown
Cause has at least the form that it has shown,
Or love what you imply but to exclude,
That vacuum has your edge, your attitude

Duality too has its Principal,
These lines you grant me may invert to points,
Or paired, poor grazing misses, at your joints,
Cross you on painless arrows to the wall

W. H. AUDEN

'Hearing of Harvest ..'

Hearing of harvest rotting in the valleys,
Seeing at end of street the barren mountains,
Round corners coming suddenly on water,
Knowing them shipwrecked who were launched for islands,
We honour founders of these starving cities,
Whose honour is the image of our sorrow.

Which cannot see its likeness in their sorrow
That brought them desperate to the brink of valleys,
Dreaming of evening walks through learned cities,
They reined their violent horses on the mountains,
Those fields like ships to castaways on islands,
Visions of green to them that craved for water.

They built by rivers and at night the water
Running past windows comforted their sorrow;
Each in his little bed conceived of islands
Where every day was dancing in the valleys,
And all the year trees blossomed on the mountains,
Where love was innocent, being far from cities.

But dawn came back and they were still in cities,
No marvellous creature rose up from the water,
There was still gold and silver in the mountains,
And hunger was a more immediate sorrow,
Although to moping villagers in valleys
Some waving pilgrims were describing islands.

'The gods', they promised, 'visit us from islands,
Are stalking head-up, lovely through the cities,
Now is the time to leave your wretched valleys
And sail with them across the lime-green water,

Sitting at their white sides, forget their sorrow,
The shadow cast across your lives by mountains.'

So many, doubtful, perished in the mountains
Climbing up crags to get a view of islands;
So many, fearful, took with them their sorrow
Which stayed them when they reached unhappy cities,
So many, careless, dived and drowned in water,
So many, wretched, would not leave their valleys

It is the sorrow, shall it melt? Ah, water
Would gush, flush, green these mountains and these valleys,
And we rebuild our cities, not dream of islands

'Look, Stranger, ...'

Look, stranger, at this island now
The leaping light for your delight discovers,
Stand stable here
And silent be,
That through the channels of the ear
May wander like a river
The swaying sound of the sea

Here at the small field's ending pause
Where the chalk wall falls to the foam, and its tall ledges
Oppose the pluck
And knock of the tide,
And the shingle scrambles after the sucking
surf, and the gull lodges
A moment on its sheer side

Far off like floating seeds the ships
Diverge on urgent voluntary errands,
And the full view
Indeed may enter
And move in memory as now these clouds do,
That pass the harbour mirror
And all the summer through the water saunter

To a Writer on His Birthday

August for the people and their favourite islands.
Daily the steamers sidle up to meet
The effusive welcome of the pier, and soon
The luxuriant life of the steep stone valleys,
The sallow oval faces of the city
Begot in passion or good-natured habit,
Are caught by waiting coaches, or laid bare
Beside the indiscriminating sea.

Lulled by the light they live their dreams of freedom,
May climb the old road twisting to the moors,
Play leapfrog, enter cafés, wear
The tigerish blazer and the dove-like shoe
The yachts upon the little lake are theirs,
The gills ask for them, and to them the band
Makes its tremendous statements; they control
The complicated apparatus of amusement.

All types that can intrigue the writer's fancy,
Or sensuality approves, are here
And I, each meal-time with the families,
The animal brother and his serious sister,
Or after breakfast on the urned steps watching
The defeated and disfigured marching by,
Have thought of you, Christopher, and wished beside me
Your squat spruce body and enormous head.

Nine years ago, upon that southern island
Where the wild Tennyson became a fossil,
Half-boys, we spoke of books and praised
The acid and austere, behind us only
The stuccoed suburb and expensive school
Scented our turf, the distant baying
Nice decoration to the artist's wish;
Yet fast the deer was flying through the wood.

Our hopes were set still on the spies' career,
Prizing the glasses and the old felt hat,
And all the secrets we discovered were
Extraordinary and false; for this one coughed
And it was gasworks coke, and that one laughed
And it was snow in bedrooms, many wore wigs,
The coastguard signalled messages of love,
The enemy were sighted from the Norman tower.

Five summers pass and now we watch
The Baltic from a balcony; the word is love
Surely one fearless kiss would cure
The million fevers, a stroking brush
The insensitive refuse from the burning core.
Was there a dragon who had closed the works
While the starved city fed it with the Jews?
Then love would tame it with his trainer's look.

Pardon the studied taste that could refuse
The golf-house quick one and the rector's tea,
Pardon the nerves the thrushes could not soothe,
Yet answered promptly the no-subtler lure
To private joking in a panelled room,
The solitary vitality of tramps and madmen,
Believed the whisper in the double bed
Pardon for these and every flabby fancy.

For now the moulding images of growth
That made our interest and us, are gone
Louder to-day the wireless roars
Its warnings and its lies, and it's impossible
Among the well-shaped cosily to flit,
Or longer to desire about our lives
The beautiful loneliness of the banks, or find
The stores and resignations of the frozen plains.

The close-set eyes of mother's boy
Saw nothing to be done, we look again

See Scandal praying with her sharp knees up,
And Virtue stood at Weeping Cross,
And Courage to his leaking ship appointed,
Slim Truth dismissed without a character,
And gaga Falsehood highly recommended,
The green thumb to the ledger knuckled down.

Greed showing shamelessly her naked money,
And all Love's wondering eloquence debased
To a collector's slang, Smartness in furs,
And Beauty scratching miserably for food,
Honour self-sacrificed for Calculation,
And Reason stoned by Mediocrity,
Freedom by Power shamefully maltreated,
And Justice exiled till Saint Geoffrey's Day.

So in this hour of crisis and dismay,
What better than your strict and adult pen
Can warn us from the colours and the consolations,
The showy arid works, reveal
The squalid shadow of academy and garden,
Make action urgent and its nature clear?
Who give us nearer insight to resist
The expanding fear, the savaging disaster?

This then my birthday wish for you, as now
From the narrow window of my fourth-floor room
I smoke into the night, and watch reflections
Stretch in the harbour. In the houses
The little pianos are closed, and a clock strikes.
And all sway forward on the dangerous flood
Of history, that never sleeps or dies,
And, held one moment, burns the hand.

LOUIS MACNEICE

Perseus

Borrowed wings on his ankles
Carrying a stone death
The hero entered the hall,
All in the hall looked up
Their breath frozen on them
And there was no more shuffle or clatter in the hall at all.

So a friend of a man comes in
And leaves a book he is lending or flowers
And goes again, alive but as good as dead,
And you are left alive, no better than dead,
And you dare not turn the leaden pages of the book or touch the
flowers, the hooded and arrested hours.

Shut your eyes
There are suns beneath your lids
Or look in the looking-glass in the end room
You will find it full of eyes
The ancient smiles of men cut out with scissors and kept in mirrors
Ever to meet me comes, in sun or dull,
The gay hero swinging the Gorgon's head
And I am left, with the dull drumming of the sun suspended and
dead
Or the dumb grey-brown of the day is a leper's cloth
And one feels the earth going round and round the globe of the
blackening mantle, a mad moth

Iceland

No shields now
Cross the knoll,
The hills are dull
With leaden shale,

Whose arms could squeeze
The breath from time
And the climb is long
From cairn to cairn.

Houses are few
But decorous
In a ruined land
Of sphagnum moss;
Corrugated iron
Farms inherit
The spirit and phrase
Of ancient sagas.

Men have forgotten
Anger and ambush,
To make ends meet
Their only business;
The lover riding
In the lonely dale
Hears the plover's
Single pipe.

And feels perhaps
But undefined
The drift of death
In the sombre wind
Deflating the trim
Balloon of lust
In a grey storm
Of dust and grit.

So we who have come
As trippers north
Have minds no match
For this land's girth,
The glacier's licking
Tongues deride

Our pride of life,
Our flashy songs.

But the people themselves
Who live here
Ignore the brooding
Fear, the sphinx,
And the radio
With tags of tune
Defies their pillared
Basalt crags.

Whose ancestors
Thought that at last
The end would come
To a blast of horns
And Gods would face
The worst in fight,
Vanish in the night
The last, the first

Night which began
Without device
In ice and rocks,
No shade or shape,
Grass and blood,
The strife of life,
Were an interlude
Which soon must pass

And all go back,
Relapse to rock
Under the shawl
Of the ice-caps,
The cape which night,
Will spread to cover
The world when the living
Flags are furled

Song

The sunlight on the garden
Hardens and grows cold,
We cannot cage the minute
Within its nets of gold;
When all is told
We cannot beg for pardon.

Our freedom as free lances
Advances towards its end,
The earth compels, upon it
Sonnets and birds descend,
And soon, my friend,
We shall have no time for dances

The sky was good for flying
Defying the church bells
And every evil iron
Siren and what it tells;
The earth compels,
We are dying, Egypt, dying.

And not expecting pardon,
Hardened in heart anew,
But glad to have sat under
Thunder and rain with you,
And grateful too
For sunlight in the garden

JOHN PUDNEY

First Drums Heard

How will I hold myself
how will I keep my stance
now at the frontier of common sense
now I am faced about
to meet my chance?

Is it much easier
to hold on with one's fear,
to grip a rifle in the frightened air,
crouched on the knees
to wait the word to fire?

Would it be better thus
with little more explained
than where artillery is being trained,
how to put on a mask
if gas is in the wind?

It would be simple surely,
hero in all opinions,
to accept discipline in the battalions
safe in the company
of fearing millions?

How will I stand apart
how will I keep my stance
in the dark crisis of the present tense
when I am face to face
with every chance?

BERNARD SPENCER

Allotments' April

Cobbled with rough stone which rings my tread
The path twists through the squared allotments.
I who blink to glimpse the lark in the warming sun,
In what sense am I joining in
Such a hallooing, rousing April day,
Now that the hedges are so gracious and
Stick out at me moist buds, small hands, their opening scrolls and
fans?

Lost to some of us the festival joy
At the bursting of the tomb, the seasonal mystery,
God walking again who lay all winter
As if in those long barrows built in the fields
To keep the root-crops warm On squires' lawns
The booted dancers twirl. But what I hear
Is spade slice in pebbled earth swinging the nigger-coloured loam.

And the love-songs, the mediæval grace,
The fluting lyrics, 'The only pretty ring-time,'
These have stopped singing For love detonates like sap
Up into the limbs of men and bears all the seasons
And the starving and the cutting and hunts terribly through lives
To find its peace But April comes as
Beast-smell flung from the fields, the hammers, the loud-speaking
weir.

The rough voices of boys playing by the hedge,
As manly as possible, their laughter, the big veins
Sprawled over the beet-leaf, light-red fires
Of flower pots heaped by the huts; they make a pause in
The wireless voice repeating pacts, persecutions,
And imprisonments and deaths and heaped violent deaths,
Impersonal now as figures in the city news

Behind me, the town curves. Its parapeted edge,
With its burnt look, guards towards the river.
The worry about money, the eyeless work
Of those who do not believe, real poverty,
The sour doorways of the poor, April which
Delights the trees and fills the roads to the South,
Does not deny or conceal Rather it adds

What more I am; excited the deep glands
And warms my animal bones as I go walking
Past the allotments and the singing water-meadows
Where hooves of cattle have plodded and cratered, and
Watch to-day go up like a single breath
Holding in its applause at masts of height
Two elms and their balanced attitude like dancers, their arms like
dancers

STEPHEN SPENDER

'He will Watch the Hawk'

He will watch the hawk with an indifferent eye
Or pitifully,
Nor on those eagles that so feared him, now
Will strain his brow,
Weapons men use, stone, sling and strong-thewed bow
He will not know.

This aristocrat, superb of all instinct,
With death close linked
Had paced the enormous cloud, almost had won
War on the sun,
Till now, like Icarus mid-ocean-drowned,
Hands, wings, are found.

With their St Vitus behaviour,
Seeing beyond our noses
A land never to flow with milk and honey,
But winter a stonethrow off and no more roses.

And I imagine sometimes at night emerging
The stunted pasty wonder of the slum,
Like a cracked bicycle frame
On which a short vocabulary is hung,
To lift transparent hands to the amazing
Sky and blow full-time

For he is mocked both in and out of season
On this and all the other silly shores,
And for this sin without compassion
The sea shall have our heirs,
And the nebulae climbing nowhere in the dark
Know that this rural world is dead like Greek

CHARLES MADGE

Solar Creation

The sun, of whose terrain we creatures are,
Is the director of all human love,
Unit of time, and circle round the earth,

And we are the commotion born of love
And slanted rays of that illustrious star,
Peregrine of the crowded fields of birth,

The crowded lane, the market and the tower.
Like sight in pictures, real at remove,
Such is our motion on dimensional earth.

Down by the river, where the ragged are,
Continuous the cries and noise of birth,
While to the muddy edge dark fishes move,

And over all, like death, or sloping hill,
Is nature, which is larger and more still

LAURENCE WHISTLER

FROM *The Burial*

The leader whom the people lost they laid
With sad bands breathing to the blurring crowd
And breath of thunder rolled in organ throats
Three days tremendously asleep in stone,
The house of horizontal majesty
And cold great eyelids, recollecting well
Much older crush and catafalque and fugue
In flag-wreathed state he lay
Isled in the awe of many whispering feet
That breathed the ancient air with waves as with
Eternal woe At each enormous hour
Snored by the clock, a sudden shout of sound
Trampled from brazen lips and trod the gloom
Of listening arc and orifice and crashed
With silver tribulation from the fans
Flat to the pavement, and the silence growled
Cities moved round him From the mumbling doors
Still fingered, pant of motors and faint horns
Were heard, remotely heard, when the wind crept
And died for terror of the scarlet dusk
Hung in proud sleep pumped up in cavernous gloom
Uncorded, pumped enormous in pale night,
Which, being breathed on, swayed a little thus
Way and that, being wakened (unawares!)

No sunlight crept. Beneath those pendant flames
A sun had gone out of the world, and all
These feet and eyes were gathered to the place
Of their lost captain, while in fume-ranks
The cars and coaches tore the humble turf
Flashing their chromium under ancient trees
Which cried, with not one shadow-twirling point,
The black assassination of the heat,
And revolution in revolting vats
Of wind and rain: tyrannicide! Which came
On the third day, when with all melancholy
And not complaining sorrow, but with pride,
They lifted him and carried him away
In the projection of procession, far
Caterpillared up valleys and foothills
Into the sliding mountains which he chose
(They said) his grave. There the appalling heights
Rang down in bolt-up shadows, and it seemed
The world had poured in lava, freckled plains,
Cities and downs and the grey sleep of seas
But in those mountains, formed as though a wave
Had been transfixed in falling by the moon
Napoleon of a million waves – dawn died
Quickly in strangulation. Round the sun
And round its first pre-natal glimmerings
Pressing upon the night red ruin hung,
Caverns of blood and froth of crimson doom
That heralded the chastisement to be,
Shattering lightning in the sulphurous wind!
This they foretold and snatched the weeping sun
Out of the cool blue hills into blood smoke
And instantly grew pale like treachery,
And darkened. From the grass the flame went out;
Waterfalls aged, trunks blackened, boulders loomed
In disillusion, valleys sighed like nuns
And woke from dreaming they were lapped in gold,
The haycock, and the hundred sainted stone

Pink-needling through the miles, vanished The wind
Around that sombre spire tossed silver birds
And caught the throb of shuddering breath, the bed
Of harmony unheard through arch and aisle
There, feet had stopped, the slur of wondering eyes;
Only steps quick, official, crossed, recrossed,
Staggered with a carpet's lolling folds,
Marched in the grey aisles till the much-scratched air
Quivered in dust and counterdust of echoes.
No eyes slid up into the ashen sheaves
Of pillars spread away in silver stalks
Mistily intermingling, no one saw
Crowned upon darkness the stern guilt regard
Of volutes atlased with tremendous pride
Of frieze and cornice over the bare place
Once of the holy lustre and the cross
Only these servants of the tyrant dead,
Now tyrant, never before, who kept no soul
To feed and glorify -- but now at ease,
Moved there Except as between life and death,
Still as the dead, unstirring, six, his guard
Who would not say Do this, or ever again
Unite great realms, but only these, life, death

Outside the doors where anyone could see
The starkness of the mighty corpse within
Projected on their awful panels -- roar
Darkened one arc of eyes and banked up heads
Unmoving Three slow channels poured their food
Into that jug of men which drank and drank
Although its lip stood crowned and quivering.
Where the thick current, there the red flags moved,
Mostly the scene hung still, dotted with flames
Time rolled upon the clock's great tongue, and filled
The wind with scattered birds Time thudded on
In beams and gloomy stone unheard Time clicked
To bayonets in a semicircle swept

By some colossal compass end to end
The bannered steps and walled about with massed
Men. Round the golden finger curved. More cold
The wind ... A thousand streaming eyes ... Some looked
At flying smoke. Some saw the giant spire
Grey-vaulted, totter forward in its sleep
Falling falling falling. The clock struck.

GEORGE BARKER

The Leaping Laughters

When will men again
Lift irresistible fists
Not bend from ends
But each man lift men
Nearer again.

Many men mean
Well: but tall walls
Impede, their hands bleed and
They fall, their seed the
Seed of the fallen.

See here the fallen
Stooping over stones, over their
Own bones: but all
Stooping doom-beaten.

Whom the noonday washes
Whole, whom the heavens compel,
And to whom pass immaculate messages,
When will men again
Lift irresistible fists
Impede impediments
Leap mountains laugh at walls?

Epistle to a Friend

What have I waited for the third of my life
Any more than you have waited for, a great grave?
When I heard the blue-eyed bird on the wave
Trumpeting his courage over a wash of grief
Keeping his cage and kingdom above the water,
I wondered why not lay that wing low, lay
That wing low, and lay that crest on the wave —
Rest, rest, my fine fellow, for death is easy
But he blows from his beak and braves the wave.

O feathery friend, I have found a friend
Who tells me of a place where I shall find
A feather heavy on my mouth and never mind.
I shall lie quiet, sleeping above the wind
O feathery friend with a flame in your hand
Fighting for life in a fog of sorrow,
Give up the ghost that echoes in the marrow,
Leave the cage empty on the rotting strand,
I know where to-day is as easy as to-morrow.

The weals where the whips stripped me at my shoulder
Heal up and on my back I bear festoons of flowers;
The cut is lips where I drink peace and power,
And love, instead of growing older and colder
Squanders its smile in a Cheshire grin, the smile
The horizon has, meeting the vague of space
And there I lie, not remembering even
The times I crashed my head against heaven,
Not remembering even a friend's face

Can I coerce you, O my fine feathery friend,
Across the Andes and the world's siren fields
Where women mourn for me before I come
And dream of love with me when I am gone?
Ecstatic world where you and I have kissed
Touching in love's lucky tangent, now

I veer off like the banking plane, and below
Glimpse the last shimmer of your wings in a mist.
O Ecstatic world where we met, but might have missed!

I have a haven I carry in my hand –
Death like a paradise poison in my pouch,
Rendering me happy with its least touch.
I have the heavenly key of a knife in my hand.
I have a friend who in my worse need
Will aid me with a blade stuck in my back,
Giving me the kiss of death indeed.
He is my friend who comes at the fatal beck
And opens the great gates that nowhere lead.

O my fine friend, I have a gift to give,
A pinch of dope to ease all your troubles.
I carry death as surely as all alive,
Contagious, incredible, acting at the double.
When I have given you flowers and tokens,
How happily the petty things you've taken –
I have a better gift to give you now.
What have you waited for the half of life,
But the end of a life's grief?

When you were lost, what were you looking for?
Or when you were absent, what was it from?
Now you are lost, and looking for your home
Now you are absent from the bliss of no more.
Let me, my fine gay one, take you to my place,
The great gap of absence where no one is:
Let us lie down on the edge of that lake,
Thinking a moment all that this poem is.
Then we will go together into the bliss of this.

And when we wait a while on the verge,
Taking a glance behind at the gay, going things,
Giving our good-bye to our rememberings,
Then, as one disrobes of clothes, we shall slip the urge,
The bloody ache of being and going on being,

Loose off the rags of flesh and the mask of whom;
The watch, the revolver, and the mirror of second being,
Revert again to the air of the closed womb,
And not feel the weight of the heavy tomb

O feathery friend with a fiend in your hand,
Scotch him before he wears you to a tear,
The great tear that lives because it quivers,
The pearl of sorrow from his point of sand
Give up the ghost that all men fear,
The spirit of life that gives meat the shivers,
O my fine feathery friend give me your hand –
I am the ghost of a ghost that was never here
I know the place for those without lives

CLIFFORD DYMENT

A Switch cut in April

This thin elastic stick was plucked
From gradual growing in a hedge,
Where early mist awakened leaf
And late damp hands with spiral stroke
Smoothed slumber from the weighted day
While flowers drooped with colours furled.

I cut quick circles with the stick:
It whistles in the April air
An eager song, a bugle call,
A signal for the running feet,
For rising flyer flashing sun,
And windy tree with surging crest.

This pliant wood like expert whip
Snaps action in its voice, commands
A quiver from the sloth, achieves

A jerk in buds, with stinging lash
A spring of movement in the stiff
And sleeping limbs of winter land.

Stuck plucked and peeled, companions lost,
Torn from its rooted stock I hold
Elate and lithe within my hand
Winged answer to the wing's impulse,
The calyx breaking into flame,
The crystal cast into the light.

DYLAN THOMAS

'The Force that Through the Green Fuse ...'

The force that through the green fuse drives the flower
Drives my green age, that blasts the roots of trees
Is my destroyer.

And I am dumb to tell the crooked rose
My youth is bent by the same wintry fever

The force that drives the water through the rocks
Drives my red blood, that dries the mouthing streams
Turns mine to wax.

And I am dumb to mouth unto my veins
How at the mountain spring the same mouth sucks.

The hand that whirls the water in the pool
Stirs the quicksand; that ropes the blowing wind
Hauls my shroud sail.

And I am dumb to tell the hanging man
How of my clay is made the hangman's lime.

The lips of time leech to the fountain head,
Love drips and gathers, but the fallen blood
Shall calm her sores

And I am dumb to tell a weather's wind
 How time has ticked a heaven round the stars

And I am dumb to tell the lover's tomb
 How at my sheet goes the same crooked worm

'Where Once the Waters

Where once the waters of your face
 Spun to my screws, your dry ghost blows,
 The dead turns up its eye,
 Where once the mermen through your ice
 Pushed up their hair, the dry wind steers
 Through salt and root and roe

Where once your green knots sank their splice
 Into the tided cord, there goes
 The green unraveller,
 His scissors oiled, his knife hung loose
 To cut the channels at their source
 And lay the wet fruits low

Invisible, your clocking tides
 Break on the lovebeds of the weeds,
 The weed of love's left dry,
 There round about your stones the shades
 Of children go who, from their voids,
 Cry to the dolphined sea.

Dry as a tomb, your coloured lids
 Shall not be latched while magic glides
 Sage on the earth and sky,
 There shall be corals in your beds,
 There shall be serpents in your tides,
 Till all our sea-faiths die

Biographical Notes

ASCHELLES ABERCROMBIE [1881-1938] (page 55). Educated at Malvern and Victoria University, Manchester. Held lectureships in poetry and professorships of English Literature at one time or another in a number of English Universities. His publications consist chiefly of poetry, plays and critical studies. His *Collected Poems* were published in 1930.

KENNETH ALLOTT [1912] (page 139). Has had verse published in *The Criterion*, *New Verse*, *Oxford Poetry*, *Contemporary Poetry and Prose* and other periodicals, and is joint author (with Stephen Tait) of a novel, *The Rhubarb Tree*, published by the Cresset Press, who are also the publishers of a volume of his poems.

WYSTAN HUGH AUDEN [1907] (page 126). Educated at St Edmund's School, Gresham's School, Holt, and Christ Church, Oxford. Associate Professor of English Literature, Ann Arbor University, Michigan, U.S.A. Author of *The Orators*, *The Dance of Death*, *Look Stranger*, *Another Time*, *New Year Letter*, *For the Time Being*, *Tennyson*, and, in collaboration, *The Dog Beneath the Skin*, *The Ascent of F. 6*, *Letters from Iceland*, *On the Frontier* and *Journey to a War*. In 1938 he edited the *Oxford Book of Light Verse*.

GEORGE BARKER [1913] (page 144). Contributor to *The Criterion*, *Orion*, *The New Statesman*, *The Spectator*, *The Listener* and numerous other periodicals and miscellanies. Among his books are *Alanna Autumnal*, *Poems*, *Janus*, *Calamiterror*, *Lament and Triumph* and *Sacred and Secular Elegies*.

HILAIRE BELLOC [1870] (page 66). Educated at the Oratory School, Edgbaston and Balliol College, Oxford, where he took a 1st Class in Honour History Schools. From 1906-10 he was Member of Parliament for Salford South. His first book was *Verses and Sonnets* 1895, which was followed a year later by *The Bad Child's Book of Beasts*. He has subsequently published many historical, biographical and critical works, and various volumes of essays, poems and humorous verses.

LAURENCE BINYON [1869-1943] (*page 60*). Born at Lancaster. Educated at St Paul's School and Trinity College, Oxford, where in 1890 he won the Newdigate Prize. In 1893 entered the Department of Printed Books, British Museum, becoming later Keeper of Prints and Drawings. One of the greatest modern authorities on Oriental Art. Author of numerous books on Art, critical studies, plays and poems.

EDMUND CHARLES BLUNDEN [1896] (*page 110*). Born at Yalding, Kent. Educated at Christ's Hospital and Queen's College, Oxford. Served in the 1914 War with the Royal Sussex Regiment and obtained an M.C. In 1922 he was awarded the Hawthornden Prize for *The Shepherd*. From 1924 to 1927 he was Professor of English Literature at Tokyo University. In 1931 he received the Bendon Medal of the Royal Society of Literature. Since 1931 he has been Fellow and Tutor in English Literature at Merton College, Oxford. Author of various prose works (including *Undertones of War*) and many volumes of poetry.

GORDON BOTTOMLEY [1874] (*page 70*). Born at Keighley. Educated at Keighley Grammar School. Author of many volumes of verse and plays, among which are *Poems of Thirty Years* and *King Lear's Wife*. In 1923 he was awarded the Femina Prize, Paris, and in 1925 the Benson Medal of the Royal Society of Literature.

RONALD BOTTRALL [1906] (*page 124*). Educated at Redruth County School and Pembroke College, Cambridge. Won the Charles Oldham Shakespeare Scholarship in 1927. In 1929 became Lecturer in English at the University of Helsinki, Finland, until 1931, when he was awarded a Commonwealth Fund Fellowship at Princeton University, U.S.A. In 1933 became Johore Professor of English Languages and Literature of Raffles College, Singapore, and in 1937 joined the staff of the British Institute of Florence. In 1939 became Secretary of the School of Oriental and African Studies at London University, was with the Air Ministry in 1940 and 1941 and is now with the British Council. His books include *The Loosening and Other Poems*, *Festivals of Fire*, *The Turning Path*, *Selected Poems* and *Farewell and Welcome*. He also edited, with his wife, *The Zephyr Book of English Verse*.

ROBERT BRIDGES [1844-1930] (*page 11*). Born at Walmer. Educated at Eton and Corpus Christi College, Oxford. After qualifying and practising as a doctor he finally gave up medicine for literature in 1882, by which time he had already published three volumes of poems. Numerous further volumes of poetry and plays and literary criticism followed and in 1913 Bridges was appointed Poet Laureate. His most important and impressive single work was his long philosophical poem, *The Testament of Beauty*, which he produced at the age of eighty-five, a year before his death.

RUPERT BROOKE [1887-1915] (*page 29*). Born at Rugby and educated at Rugby, where his father was a master, and King's College, Cambridge. He took part in the unsuccessful defence of Antwerp in 1914. In the following year, on his way to the Dardanelles, he died, and was buried on the island of Skyros. His first book of verses was published in 1911, another in 1915 and a volume of his collected poems in 1918.

ROY DUNNACHIE CAMPBELL [1920] (*page 118*). Born at Durban, Natal. Educated at Durban High School. Has lived largely in France and Spain and scored notable successes as a bull-fighter and in steer-throwing. Volunteered as a ranker and served with the Imperial Army in North and East Africa until disabled and discharged in 1944, became a B B C talks producer. His published works include *The Flaming Terrapin*, *Adamastor*, *The Georgiad*, *Taurine Provence*, *Broken Record*, *Flowering Rifle* and *Talking Bronco*.

GILBERT KEITH CHESTERTON [1874-1936] (*page 47*). Born in London. Educated at St Paul's School. Entered journalism, publishing his first book, *The Wild Knight and Other Poems*, in 1900. *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* appeared in 1904, and during the last thirty years of his life a year rarely passed without his publishing one or more volumes of essays, verses, stories or critical studies. In 1922 he became a convert to Rome, and a number of his later books deal with the religious problems with which his vigorous mind became largely occupied.

RICHARD CHURCH [1893] (*page 107*). Was born in London. He was educated at Dulwich Hamlet School, and then, like his father and grandfather, entered the Civil Service. 'I loathed,' he says, 'the bureaucratic machine, its capture by the highly sterilized Fabian system, and all the backstair life of government and politics.' For twenty-four years, however, he carried on, occupying his evenings and early mornings with literary work until a breakdown in health necessitated his retirement from the Service and enabled him to devote his entire time to writing. He has published fourteen books of verse and seventeen of prose, and has contributed many critical articles and reviews to newspapers and periodicals. In 1937 he received the Femina-Vie Heureuse Prize for his novel *The Porch*.

WILLIAM HENRY DAVIES [1871-1940] (*page 42*). Born at Newport, Monmouthshire, of Welsh parents. Such education as he had was picked up from tramps in England and America and on cattle-boats on which he made nearly a dozen trips between America and England. Tramped for six years, then peddled laces and pins, varying this by occasional street-singing. His first volume of poems, *The Soul's Destroyer*, was published in 1907, and his famous *Autobiography of a Super-Tramp* in the subsequent year. He was also the author of much other work, both prose and poetry.

WALTER DE LA MARE [1873] (*page 67*). Born in Kent. Educated at St Paul's Cathedral Choir School. His first book was *Songs of Childhood*, published in 1902. Since then he has published many volumes of poetry as well as verse for children (amongst the latter being *Peacock Pie*, which appeared in 1913), plays, novels and short stories.

JOHN DRINKWATER [1882-1937] (*page 55*). Educated at Oxford High School and Birmingham University. After twelve years as an insurance clerk he became one of the founders of the Pilgrim Players in which the Birmingham Repertory Theatre had its origin. His play, *Abraham Lincoln*, appeared in 1918, and his other plays include *Oliver Cromwell*, *Robert E. Lee* and *Bird in Hand*. He also published several books of poems and some biographies and critical studies.

CLIFFORD DYMENT [1914] (*page* 147) Born in Alfreton, Derbyshire. Educated at elementary and secondary schools. Worked as shop assistant, clerk and commercial traveller. Has contributed to many periodicals and anthologies, and is the author of four books of poems – *First Day* (1935), *Straight or Curly?* (1937), *The Axe in the Wood* (1944) and *Selected Poems* (1945).

THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT [1888] (*page* 93) Born in St Louis, USA. Educated at Harvard, the Sorbonne and Merton College, Oxford. Since 1913 he has lived mainly in London, where after a short time as a bank clerk he taught and lectured. He is a director of the publishing firm of Faber and Faber Ltd. In 1927 he was naturalized a British citizen. In addition to his various volumes of poetry he has also published much important critical work, and is the author of several plays (including *Murder in the Cathedral* and *The Family Reunion*). He was awarded an O.M. in the 1948 New Year Honours List.

WILLIAM EMPSON [1906] (*page* 125) Educated at Cambridge, where he distinguished himself in Mathematics and English Literature. Has occupied Chairs in English Literature at Universities in Japan and China. Member of B B C staff 1940–7, Chinese editor in Far Eastern Service. Left B B C. to return to China as representative of the British Council. His poetry has appeared under the imprints of Chatto and Windus and Faber and Faber.

JAMES ELROY FLECKER [1884–1915] (*page* 26) Born at Lewisham. Educated at Uppingham and Trinity College, Oxford. Studied Oriental languages and entered Consular Service, being sent to Constantinople in 1910 and becoming Vice-Consul at Beirut the following year. His *The Bridge of Fire* appeared in 1907, another volume of poems in 1911, *The Golden Journey to Samarkand* in 1913 and *The Old Ships* in 1915. His collected prose and the plays, *Hassan* and *Don Juan*, were published posthumously. He died of consumption in Switzerland.

JOHN FREEMAN [1880–1929] (*page* 40) Born in London. Became Chief Executive Officer in the Department of National Health Insurance. His first book of poems appeared in 1919 and others in

1921, 1925, 1926 and 1928. In 1920 he was awarded the Hawthornden Prize.

WILFRID GIBSON [1878] (*page 75*). Born at Hexham, Northumberland. Became a social worker in the East End of London and later served in the ranks in the 1914 war. He is the author of more than twenty volumes of poems.

OLIVER ST JOHN GOGARTY [1878] (*page 76*). Educated at Stonyhurst, Trinity College, Dublin, and Oxford. Qualified as a doctor of medicine and subsequently became a Senator of the Irish Free State. His publications include *An Offering of Swans*, *Poems and Plays*, *Wild Apples* and, more recently, *As I was Going Down Sackville Street*, *Others to Adorn*, *Tumbling in the Hay*, *Going Native* and *Mr Petunia*.

GERALD GOULD [1885-1936] (*page 58*). Educated at Bracondale School, Norwich; University College, London, and Magdalen College, Oxford, where he took 1st Class Honours in Classics and became a Fellow of Merton College. He abandoned an academic career to take up writing and politics, and from 1919 to 1922 he was Associate-Editor of *The Daily Herald*. He was the author of a number of volumes of essays and poetry and of several sociological and political books, and for some time before his death regularly reviewed new novels in *The Observer*. His collected poems were published in 1929.

JULIAN HENRY GRENFELL [1888-1915] (*page 37*). Son of the first Lord Desborough. Educated at Eton and Balliol College, Oxford. In 1910 obtained a commission in the army and was killed in action in the 1914 War. As an author his fame rests on the poem, *Into Battle*, which appears in this collection.

FREDERICK WILLIAM HARVEY [1888] (*page 100*). Born in Gloucestershire. Became a solicitor. He served in the 1914 War and was taken prisoner in 1916. His published works include *Ducks*, *Farewell* and *Comrades in Captivity*.

FREDERICK ROBERT HIGGINS [1896-1941] (*page 112*). Born in Foxford, Co Mayo. Educated in country schools and in Dublin.

His first poems appeared in print when he was seventeen. He has edited several periodicals. His own publications include *Island Blood*, *The Dark Breed*, *The Gap of Brightness* and *Arable Pastures*.

ALFRED EDWARD HOUSMAN [1859-1936] (*page 22*) Educated at Bromsgrove School and St John's College, Oxford. Became one of the most distinguished Classical scholars of his time and Professor of Latin, first at the University of London and subsequently at Cambridge. His public fame, however, rests on his two small books of verses—*The Shropshire Lad*, published in 1896, and *Last Poems*, published in 1922.

JAMES JOYCE [1882-1941] (*page 81*) Born in Dublin. Educated at Clongowes Wood College, Belvedere College and Royal University, Dublin. Lived for a time in Dublin and then in Rome, Trieste, Zurich and Paris. His first published work was a book of poems entitled *Chamber Music* (1907). *Dubliners* appeared in 1914, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in 1916 and his famous *Ulysses* in 1925. *Finnegans Wake* was published in 1939.

RUDYARD KIPLING [1865-1936] (*page 31*). Born in Bombay and educated at United Services College, Devon. Worked as a journalist in India from 1882 to 1889, during which time his publications included *Departmental Duties*, *Plain Tales from the Hills*, *Soldiers Three* and *Wee Willie Winkie*. His first novel, *The Light that Failed*, appeared in 1891, and the first of his books for children, *The Jungle Book*, in 1894. In 1907 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

DAVID HERBERT LAWRENCE [1885-1930] (*page 50*). Born at Eastwood, Notts. Father a coal-miner. Educated at University College, Nottingham, where he obtained scholarships, and became for a time a clerk and a schoolmaster. His novel, *The White Peacock*, appeared in 1911, and was followed by *The Trespasser* in 1912 and *Sons and Lovers* in 1913. He then travelled in Europe and Mexico, publishing *Twilight in Italy* in 1916, a volume of poems in the subsequent year, and *Mornings in Mexico* in 1927. *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was published in 1928, the expurgated English edition appearing four years later. He was also author of a number of

volumes of short stories, essays and plays, and produced a quantity of drawings and paintings.

C. DAY LEWIS [1904] (*page 120*) Won a scholarship to Sherborne School and an Exhibition to Wadham College, Oxford. Spent a number of years as a schoolmaster: worked at Ministry of Information 1941-6. Clark Lecturer, Trinity College, Cambridge 1946. His books, which range from poetry to novels and critical studies, include *A Time to Dance*, *A Hope for Poetry*, *Starting Point*, *Word over All*, *Poetry for You*, *The Poetic Image*, and a verse translation of Virgil's *Georgics*.

LILIAN BOWES LYON [1895] (*page 110*) Born in Northumberland. Went to no school, but spent eighteen months at Oxford University shortly after the 1914 War. In 1929 she published a novel, *The Buried Stream*, and another anonymously two years later. Her first book of poems, *The White Hare*, appeared in 1934 and her second, *Bright Feather Fading*, in 1936. She lives in Hertfordshire, but remarks that it is to Northumberland that both she and her work really belong.

LOUIS MACNEICE [1907] (*page 131*). Born at Belfast. Read *Litteræ Humaniores* at Oxford 1926-30, then became Lecturer in Classics at the University of Birmingham until 1936, when appointed Lecturer in Greek at Bedford College, London. Since 1941 has been a feature writer and producer for the B.B.C. His books include *Blind Fireworks*, *Letters from Iceland* (with W. H. Auden), *The Earth Compels*, *Autumn Journal*, *The Poetry of W. B. Yeats*, *Plant and Phantom*, *Christopher Columbus*, *Springboard*, *The Dark Tower*, *Holes in the Sky*.

CHARLES MADGE [1912] (*page 140*). Educated at Winchester and Magdalene College, Cambridge. Founder and organizer of Mass-observation. Contributor to numerous periodicals and author of several books. Is a director of The Pilot Press Ltd.

JOHN MASEFIELD [1878] (*page 71*) As a boy ran away to sea. He then lived for two years in America working at odd jobs, re-

turned to England and became attached to the staff of the *Manchester Guardian*. The first of his many volumes of poems was *Salt-Water Ballads* which appeared in 1902. Among his long narrative poems are *The Everlasting Mercy*, published in 1911, *Dauber* published in 1913 and *Reynard the Fox* published in 1919. He is also the author of a number of plays, novels, essays and short stories. He was appointed Poet Laureate on the death of Robert Bridges in 1930 and in 1935 received the Order of Merit. In 1937 he was elected President of the Society of Authors in succession to Sir James Barrie.

CHARLOTTE MEW [1870-1928] (*page 25*) Daughter of an architect whose early death left his family in financial difficulties. Charlotte Mew never escaped from poverty, although her circumstances were alleviated when, as a result of efforts made on her behalf by Thomas Hardy, John Masefield and Walter de la Mare, she received in 1922 a Civil List pension of £75 a year. Shortly afterwards, however, the death of her mother, followed by the death of her sister, led to a breakdown in health, and her sad life was ended by her own hand in a London nursing home.

ALICE CHRISTIANA MEYNELL [1847-1922] (*page 19*). Spent much of her youth in Italy. Married Wilfrid Meynell. Her first volume of poems, *Preludes*, was published in 1875. Further volumes appeared in 1901, 1918 and 1923, and in the latter year a complete edition of her poems was also published. She was also the author of a number of books of essays and criticism.

HAROLD MONRO [1879-1932] (*page 43*). Born in Brussels. Educated at Radley College and Caius College, Cambridge. Author of some half-dozen books of poems. Founded in 1912 the Poetry Bookshop, where with his wife's help he did much to fan revival of interest in poetry and was responsible for the publication of the books of *Georgian Poetry* edited by Edward Marsh.

THOMAS STURGE MOORE [1870-1944] (*page 67*) Born at Hastings. Author of many volumes of poetry. He was also a wood-engraver and wrote several books of art criticism.

EDWIN MUIR [1887] (*page 86*). Born at Deerness, Orkney Islands. He attended Kirkwall Burgh School until he was fourteen, when, with the rest of his family, he went down to Glasgow. From then until he was thirty-one he worked in various offices there. In 1919 he married Willa Anderson and came to London, where he lived for two years on free-lance work. In 1921 he gave up a job on *The New Age* and he and his wife moved to Prague. They lived a nomad life in various continental countries until about 1927. In 1945 he became resident representative of the British Council in Prague. He has written several volumes of poetry, including *Variations on a Time Theme*, some fiction, much criticism, and a good deal of translation jointly with his wife.

SIR HENRY JOHN NEWBOLT [1862-1938] (*page 28*). Born at Bilston. Educated at Clifton College and Corpus Christi College, Oxford. He was called to the Bar and practised for twelve years. From 1900 to 1904 he was Editor of the *Monthly Review* and President of the English Association in 1927-8. He was created a Knight in 1915 and a Companion of Honour in 1922. His numerous publications include, in addition to verse, naval and military histories and books for the young.

ALFRED NOYES [1880] (*page 77*). Born in Staffordshire. Educated at Exeter College, Oxford. In 1914 he was elected to the Professorship of Modern English Literature at Princeton University. In 1916 he became temporarily attached to the Foreign Office. In 1918 he was awarded a C.B.E. He is the author of a large number of books, mainly poems and literary criticism. His most acclaimed work is his epic of scientific discovery, *The Torchbearers*, published in three volumes, the first in 1922 and the last in 1930. In the latter year he was received into the Roman Catholic Church.

WILFRED OWEN [1893-1918] (*page 44*). Born at Oswestry. Killed in action in France a week before the Armistice of 1918. A volume of his poems was published in 1920.

HERBERT E. PALMER [1880] (*page 78*). Born at Market Rasen, Lincs. He was educated at Woodhouse Grove School, Birmingham.

University and Bonn University He became a schoolmaster in 1899 and was teaching in France and Germany for over eight years previous to the War of 1914 In 1921 he gave up teaching to concentrate on literature and journalism In 1932 he was awarded a Civil List pension for 'distinction as a poet' He is the author of numerous volumes of verse of which the most recent include *Summit and Chasm*, *The Vampire*, *The Gallows Cross* and *A Sword in the Desert* Among his prose works are *The Mistletoe Child* and *Post-Victorian Poetry*

RUTH PITTER [1897] (page 117). Daughter of an elementary school teacher. Educated at an elementary school and at Coburn School, Bow From 1915 to 1917 she was employed at the War Office and from 1918 to 1930 by the Walberswick Peasant Pottery Co. Since 1930 she has been a partner in the firm of Deane and Forester Her first volume of poems was published in 1920, further volumes appearing in 1927 and 1931. *A Mad Lady's Garland* was published in 1934 and *A Trophy of Arms* (which won her the Hawthornden Prize) in 1936 Since then she has written *The Spirit Watches*, *The Rude Potato*, *The Bridge* and *Pitter on Cats*

JOHN PUDNEY [1909] (page 135) Educated at Gresham's School, Holt Producer and writer on staff of B.B.C. 1934-7, Correspondent of *News Chronicle*, 1937-41, served with the R.A.F. in the Mediterranean and France 1941-5 Stood for Parliament as a Labour candidate in the General Election of 1945 Poet, novelist, short story writer and journalist. His books include *Spring Encounter*, *Open the Sky*, *And Lastly the Fireworks*, *Dispersal Point*, *The Green Grass Grew All Round*, *It Breathed Down my Neck* and, the official publications, *The Air Battle of Malta* and *Atlantic Bridge*

HERBERT EDWARD READ [1893] (page 108) Was born at Kirbymoorside, Yorkshire He was educated at Crossley's School, Halifax, and Leeds University He fought in France and Belgium 1915-18 and was awarded the M.C. and the D.S.O. Subsequently he was for nine years Assistant Keeper of the Victoria and Albert Museum and then until 1933 Professor of Fine Art at Edinburgh

University. He is now a Director of the publishing firm of Routledge. His principal publications include *Collected Poems* (1914-1934), *The Green Child*, *The Innocent Eye*, *Reason and Romanticism*, *English Prose Style*, *Form in Modern Poetry*, *Wordsworth*, *In Defence of Shelley*, *The Meaning of Art*, *Art Now*, *Art and Society*, *Education through Art*, *A World within a War*, *A Coat of Many Colours* and *The Grass Roots of Art*.

ISAAC ROSENBERG [1890-1918] (*page 39*) Killed in action in the 1914 War. He wrote poetry from boyhood, but little of it appeared in print until the publication of a collection of his poems four years after his death. His complete works, including a mass of unfinished material — prose as well as verse — appeared in 1937.

GEORGE WILLIAM RUSSELL ('A. E.') [1867-1935] (*page 32*). Born in Co. Armagh, Ireland. Educated at Rathmines School. During much of his life concerned himself with Irish agricultural problems and from 1905 to 1923 edited *The Irish Homestead*. In 1923 he founded the *Irish Statesman* which he edited until 1930. He also played a prominent part in the formation of the Irish National Theatre, but it is as a poet and mystic that he is likely to be chiefly remembered. Volumes of his poetry appeared at frequent intervals from 1904 until the end of his life.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON [1886] (*page 84*). Educated at Marlborough and Clare College, Cambridge. Served in the 1914 War. Was Literary Editor of *The Daily Herald* in 1919. He was awarded the Hawthornden Prize for his *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man* published in 1928. Among his volumes of verse are *The Old Huntsman* published in 1917, *Counter Attack*, *War Poems*, *Vigils* and *Rhymed Ruminations*.

EDITH SITWELL [1887] (*page 89*). D Litt. Born at Scarborough. Educated privately. In collaboration with her brothers, Osbert and Sacheverell, was responsible for *Wheels*, which appeared annually from 1916 to 1921 and contained poetry which contrasted violently in character with the contents of the Georgian anthologies which were appearing at the same time. Among the most recent of her many volumes of poetry are *Street Songs*, *Green*

Song and *A Song of the Cold* Her other works include *Bath*, *The English Eccentrics*, *Aspects of Modern Poetry*, *Victoria of England*, *I Live Under a Black Sun*, *A Poet's Notebook* and *Fanfare for Elizabeth*.

SIR OSBERT SITWELL, BART [1892] (page 105). Born in London, eldest son of Sir George Sitwell, Bart, and brother of Edith and Sacheverell Sitwell Educated at Eton Served from 1913 to 1919 with Grenadier Guards Author of several novels (including *Before the Bombardment*), a number of volumes of short stories, many poems (including *England Reclaimed* and *Mrs Kimber*) Three volumes of his autobiography have so far appeared under the titles of *Left Hand*, *Right Hand*¹, *The Scarlet Tree* and *Great Morning*

SACHEVERELL SITWELL [1897] (page 113) Born in Scarborough Brother of Edith and Osbert Sitwell Educated at Eton and Balliol College, Oxford Author of a number of volumes of poems (including *The Thirteenth Caesar*, *The Cyder Feast* and *Canons of Giant Art*), biographies of Mozart and Liszt and various studies of Baroque Art in different parts of Europe His *British Architects and Craftsmen* appeared in 1945

BERNARD SPENCER [1909] (page 136) Is a schoolmaster Edited *Oxford Poetry* in 1931 and 1932, and poems of his have appeared in *New Verse* and elsewhere

STEPHEN SPENDER [1909] (page 137) Educated at University College School and University College, Oxford Served with the N F S during war Co-editor of *Horizon* 1939-41 Among his recent works are *Trial of a Judge*, *The Still Centre*, *Ruins and Visions*, *Life and the Poet*, *The Creative Element*, *Instead of Death*, *Rejoice in the Abyss* and *European Witness*

JAMES STEPHENS [1882] (page 82) Born in Dublin Became a typist in a Dublin lawyer's office Author of *The Crock of Gold*, published in 1912, other books of stories and fairy stories and several volumes of poetry

ARTHUR SYMONS [1865-1945] (*page 60*) Born in Wales of Cornish parentage His first publication was *An Introduction to the Study of Browning* in 1886. Numerous other literary studies, volumes of poetry, travel books and work coming generally under the head of Belles Lettres followed. He was a close friend of Verlaine and in much of his work was considerably influenced by Baudelaire and the Symbolist movement

A. S. J. TESSIMOND [1902] (*page 120*). After he left Liverpool University he tried schoolmastering for a few months, then gave it up and worked in London bookshops for about two years For the last eight years or so he has been a copywriter in two successive London advertising agencies. He has published one book of verse, *The Walls of Glass*.

DYLAN THOMAS [1914] (*page 148*) Educated at Swansea Grammar School Did a year's newspaper reporting, and for a time tried odd jobs and hack journalism Published 18 *Poems* in 1934 and 25 *Poems* in 1936. Books published since that time have been *The Map of Love*, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog*, *The World I Breathe* and *Deaths and Entrances* He is also a frequent broadcaster

PHILIP EDWARD THOMAS [1878-1917] (*page 24*) Educated at St Paul's School and Lincoln College, Oxford. Served in the 1914 War with the Artists' Rifles and died in action at Arras He was the author of several books on the English countryside and of a number of volumes of essays, critical studies and poems A collected edition of the latter was published in 1920

FRANCIS JOSEPH THOMPSON [1859-1907] (*page 14*). Born at Preston Educated at Ushaw College, Durham, and Owens College, Manchester, where he studied medicine Failing to obtain a degree, he came to London and lived in ill-health and poverty until Wilfrid and Alice Meynell, to whom he had submitted some poems, recognizing in him a poet of unusual quality, came to his aid His first volume of poems, which included *The Hound of Heaven*, was published in 1893 and others in 1895 and 1897 His prose work consisted chiefly of literary criticism, but included *Health and*

Holiness and a *Life of Ignatius Loyola*, the latter being published two years after his death of consumption in 1907. The complete edition of his works, edited by Wilfrid Meynell, was published in 1913.

WALTER JAMES REDFERN TURNER [1889-1946] (page 103). Born in Melbourne, Australia, and educated at the Scotch College, Melbourne. He then travelled in South Africa and Europe until the outbreak of war in 1914 and served with the armed forces during the years 1916-19. He was music critic to *The New Statesman*, dramatic critic to *The London Mercury* from 1919 to 1923, and literary editor of *The Daily Herald* from 1920 to 1923. He was the author of a number of volumes of poetry and also published several novels and collections of essays and studies. His play, *The Man who Ate the Popomack*, was published in 1922.

LAURENCE WHISTLER [1912] (page 141). Educated at Stowe School and Balliol College, Oxford. His first book was *Armed October*, published in 1932. *Four Walls*, for which he was awarded the first King's Medal for poetry, appeared in 1934. He has since published further volumes of poetry, and a life of Sir John Vanbrugh.

HUMBERT WOLFE [1885-1940] (page 59). Educated at Bradford Grammar School and Wadham College, Oxford. Became Principal Assistant Secretary at the Ministry of Labour. In 1918 received a CBE and in 1925 a CB. Author of many books of verse and critical studies.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS [1865-1939] (page 33). Born in Dublin. Educated at Godolphin School, Hammersmith, and Erasmus Smith School, Dublin. After three years as an art student he abandoned art for literature and founded Irish Literary Societies in London and Dublin. He also, with the co-operation of Lady Gregory and other enthusiasts, created the Irish National Theatre. His first publication was *The Wanderings of Oisín* in 1889. Subsequently he published a large number of plays, volumes of poetry, anthologies and critical works. In 1923 he received the Nobel Prize for Literature.

ANDREW YOUNG [1885] (*page 83*) Born in Elgin. He was brought up in Edinburgh, where he first attended the Royal High School, then graduated in Arts at the University. He came south in 1920 to live in Hove and explore the countryside in search of 'plants and poems.' He has written a religious play *Nicodemus*, for which Imogen Holst wrote the music. Among his books of poems are *Winter Harvest*, *The White Blackbird*, *Speak to the Earth* and *Collected Poems*.

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